NATION

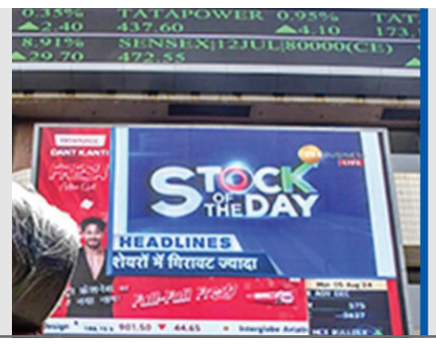
Vadodara remains flooded for 2nd day, Army called in

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Nifty gains marginally to hit lifetime high

≫ Page: 7 ≪



SPORTS

India aims to get 10 medals in athletics

≫ Page: 8 ≪

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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Bail rule, jail exception even in money laundering cases: SC

This comes in the wake of bail to Hemant Soren's associate

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

Liberty of an individual is always a rule and deprivation an exception even in cases registered under the anti-money laundering law which has stringent provisions for bail, the Supreme Court said on Wednesday.

Citing the enduring legal principle that "bail is the rule and jail is the exception", a bench of Justices BR Gavai and KV Viswanathan granted bail to Prem Prakash, an aide of Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, in a money laundering case related to an alleged land scam.

"Liberty of the individual is always a rule and deprivation is the exception. Deprivation can only be by the procedure established by law, which has to be a valid and reasonable procedure," the bench said.

- The top court said confessional statements given in custody by an accused in a different case attracting the provisions of Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA)will not be admissible in the court of law

The top court said confessional statements given in custody by an accused in a different case attracting the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) will not be admissible in the court of law.

Prakash, while in custody, had purportedly confessed to his involvement in another land scam case.

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

"We have no hesitation in holding that when an accused is in custody under PMLA, irrespective of the case for which he is under custody, any statement under Section 50 PMLA to the same investigating agency is inadmissible against the maker.

The bench referred to a 2022 verdict of the apex court which upheld the provisions of the PMLA and its 9 August judgement in the money laundering and corruption cases against former Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia who was granted bail and said, it has been made amply clear that even under PMLA the governing principle is that "bail is the rule and jail is the exception".

The bench said all that section 45 of PMLA (which lays down twin conditions for bail of an accused in a money laundering case) says is that certain conditions are to be satisfied. The twin conditions for bail under PMLA are that the judge should be prima facie satisfied that the accused has not committed the offence and that he is not likely to commit any offence while on bail.

—PTI

ILLICIT AFFAIR SUSPECTED

Kempegowda International Airport Terminal 1 ***PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA***

CONTRACT WORKER STABBED TO DEATH AT CITY AIRPORT'S T1

BENGALURU, 28 AUG

A 45-year-old man was brutally murdered at Kempegowda International Airport on Tuesday evening near the airport's terminal one at Devanahalli. The victim, identified as Ramakrishna, a trolly operator staff at the airport was stabbed to death by one Ramesh. In a statement by the Deputy Commissioner of Police, North East Division, said, " The accused Ramesh travelled in the BMTC bus to the airport and killed him with a machete near washroom at the parking area of terminal one." The Devanahalli police officers told **Salar News** that it was a case of an extramarital affair. *—Salar News*

B'desh's interim govt lifts ban on Jamaat-e-Islami

DHAKA, 28 AUG

Bangladesh's interim government on Wednesday revoked a ban on the Rightwing Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir, less than a month after it was imposed on the Islamist party by former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, who was forced to resign following massive protests against her government. The erstwhile Awami League government led by Hasina had imposed a ban on Jamaat on 1 August, accusing the Islamist party as a "militant and terrorist" organisation. The government blamed Jamaat's student wing for inciting chaos over quota system for government jobs. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 6

2nd rape case against Malayalam actor Siddique

T'PURAM, 28 AUG

A second FIR was filed against a Malayalam actor Siddique following the allegations of sexual harassment against various directors and actors in the wake of revelations in the Justice Hema Committee report. The Museum Police recorded the statement of a female actor who filed a complaint against senior Malayalam actor Siddique for sexually assaulting her. The actor filed a complaint with the state police chief via email. Amid the allegations of sexual assault, the state government on 25 August announced the establishment of a seven-member panel to probe them. *—Agencies*

>>>More on Page 4

HP raises age of marriage for women to 21 years

SHIMLA, 28 AUG

The Himachal Pradesh Assembly on Tuesday passed a bill raising the marriage age for women from 18 to 21 years. Introducing the bill, Health and Women Empowerment Minister Dhani Ram Shandil said that provision of Child Marriage Act 2006 was enacted to provide for prohibition of child marriages, adding it has become necessary to increase the minimum age of marriage for girls in order to provide gender equality and opportunities of obtaining higher education. Moreover, early pregnancies also have adverse effects on the health of the girls, the minister said. *—PTI*

LIFER FOR ANTI-NATIONAL POST

Influencers who praise UP govt schemes to get Rs 8L

LUCKNOW, 28 AUG

Uttar Pradesh government has drafted a new digital media policy that allows it to pay up to Rs 8 lakh per month to an influencer to promote its schemes. It also warns of legal action if any "objectionable content" is put online.

The move triggered sharp reaction from the Opposition, which has accused the state's BJP government of trying to stifle freedom of expression.

The state government will pay up to Rs 8 lakh per month to influencers and holders of these accounts on different social media platforms such as Facebook, X, Instagram and YouTube depending on their followers and subscribers.

PHOTO: PIXABAY

The government will also take legal action against the social media operators, influencers, firm or agency concerned in case "objectionable content" is uploaded, it stated.

The policy will also help create jobs. According to the digital media policy, digital mediums like X Facebook, Instagram and YouTube will also be encouraged to display content, videos, tweets, posts, reels based on the schemes and achievements of the state government by listing the related agencies or firms and issuing advertisements.

"The category-wise maximum payout limit for payments to account holders or operators or influencers of X, Facebook, Instagram has been fixed at Rs 5 lakh, Rs 4 lakh, Rs 3 lakh and Rs 2 lakh per month respectively. *—PTI*

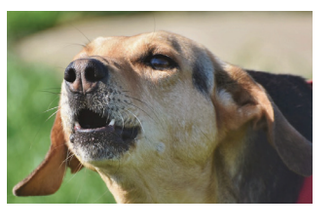


PHOTO: PIXABAY

Elderly City woman dies after stray dogs attack her

BENGALURU, 28 AUG

A 76-year-old retired teacher died after she was attacked by a pack of stray dogs while she was on her morning walk near her house here on Wednesday, police said.

According to the police, Rajdulari Sinha was suddenly attacked by at least 10-12 dogs in the playground at Air Force East 7th Residential Camp in Jalahalli around 6.30 am.

A case of unnatural death report has been filed in Gangamma Gudi police station, a senior police officer said.

Sinha, mother-in-law of an airman sustained multiple grievous injuries and died on the way to the hospital, he said.

Posting on social media platform X, a social media user, who claimed to have witnessed the incident stated, "Its a tragic scene in the morning itself. Dozen of stray dogs attack a lady. I shouted, and my family joined me, until a gentleman comes the dogs attacked. Jalahalli Airforce playground, Vidyaranyapura. I am guilty that I couldnt help her because of this wall." *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

Behind the white coat, K'taka docs in misery & despair

VAISHNAVI GOPALRAJ
BENGALURU, 28 AUG

Swiss psychiatrist and psychotherapist Carl Jung once said: "Medicine cures diseases but only doctors can cure patients." Unfortunately, the women doctors in government hospitals in Karnataka have only stories of despair and suffering to share. They are harassed, eve-teased and denied basic amenities, and adding to the misery, they have to work in unsafe environments, leaving them vulnerable. In the aftermath of the rape and murder of a postgraduate trainee doctor at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College Hospital, **Salar News** carried out a survey among select doctors in Karnataka to understand their working conditions and it revealed that they are grappling with deplorable conditions that demand urgent reform.

On Tuesday, the State government announced that the hospitals will be beefed up with security guards, CCTVs and provided streetlights. Medical Education Minister Sharan Prakash Patil directed government medical colleges to use their funds to improve infrastructure and said a task force will be set up in every hospital to address issues. However, the women doctors at districts and taluk hospitals are worried that these measures will be not implemented in theirs because they are often neglected by the government. Ankita, a junior resident doctor from Kushtagi Taluk Hospital, Gadag district, said, "City hospitals have been well-equipped, while rural ones will continue to remain unsafe. Doctors are threatened by locals during treatments as there is no security guard in the hospitals. The hospital doesn't provide any transportation and during late night emergencies, I am forced to travel alone from my hostel to hospital on roads without street lights." *—Salar News*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

>>>More on Page 2

Didi ensures capital punishment for rape

KOLKATA, 28 AUG

Asserting that her government has zero tolerance to incidents of rape, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday said an amendment to existing laws will be passed in the state Assembly next week to ensure capital punishment to convicted rapists.

Banerjee said that she would sit for dharna outside Raj Bhavan here if the governor delays in giving assent to the amended bill or forwards it to the President for ratification.

PHOTO: ANI

She also said that the TMC will launch a movement from Saturday at the state's grassroots to create pressure on the Centre to pass legislation for capital punishment of convicted rapists.

She said women will be at the forefront of the proposed dharna accompanied by "their brothers".

Meanwhile, The Indian Medical Association (IMA) on Wednesday suspended the membership of former RG Kar Medical College and Hospital principal Dr Sandip Ghosh, amid a CBI probe into the alleged rape and murder case of the resident doctor. Centre asked states to implement to prevent violence against medics. Security audit of district hospitals, night patrolling, regulated access at large health facilities were among the measures. *—PTI*

NATURE'S WRATH

For the first time, snow completely disappeared from Uttarakhand's Om Parvat, raising concerns among people about the phenomenon. Experts attributed it to climate change, road widening, tourism & mining. The photos show snowfall last year and dry mountains this year

INDIA'S LARGEST OTT

₹70K cr Reliance-Disney merger gets nod

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) on Wednesday approved the merger of media assets of Reliance Industries and The Walt Disney Co to create the country's largest media empire worth over Rs 70,000 crore.

The deal, announced six months ago, faced scrutiny by the anti-trust regulator and the approval has come after the parties proposed certain modifications to the original transaction structure. In a post on X, the regulator said it has cleared the "proposed combination involving Reliance Industries Limited, Viacom18 Media Private Limited, Digital18 Media Limited, Star India Private Limited and Star Television Productions Limited, subject to the compliance of voluntary modifications".

Viacom18 is part of the RIL group, and SIPL is wholly-owned by The Walt Disney Company. STPL, a company incorporated in the British Virgin Islands, is owned indirectly by The Walt Disney. CCI, however, did not disclose voluntary modifications in the original deal made by the two parties.

Reliance Industries Ltd and its affiliates will hold 63.16 per cent of the combined entity ***PHOTO: X @MRSEYMOURDUCK***

Under the deal, Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) and its affiliates will hold 63.16 per cent of the combined entity that will house two streaming services and 120 television channels. The Walt Disney will hold the remaining 36.84 per cent stake in the combined entity. Reliance Industries has also agreed to invest close to Rs 11,500 crore into the joint venture to give it the muscle to fight rivals like Japan's Sony and Netflix.

- Disney + Hotstar was launched in India in 2020 post the acquisition of the entertainment assets of 21st Century Fox at a valuation of USD 71.3 billion

Its subsidiary NW18 owns the news channels CNBC/CNNNews. Reliance separately owns a movie production arm- JioStudios, and majority stakes in two listed cable distribution companies Den and Hathway.

Disney + Hotstar was launched in India in 2020 post the acquisition of the entertainment assets of 21st Century Fox at a valuation of USD 71.3 billion. *—PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

SM Krishna discharged from hospital

BENGALURU, 28 AUG

Veteran politician and former Karnataka Chief Minister SM Krishna was on Wednesday discharged from a private hospital here, where he was admitted with respiratory issues. "SM Krishna, former chief minister, (former) union minister was discharged from Manipal Hospital today. He was admitted with respiratory issues months ago under the care of Dr Satyanarayana Mysuru and the critical care team," Manipal Hospital said in a statement. Coordinated care and patient's efforts have led to discharge, it said, while wishing the 92-year-old former External Affairs Minister speedy recovery and further recuperation at his home. Krishna was Chief Minister of Karnataka from 11 October, 1999 to 28 May, 2004. *—PTI*

BJP MLC calls for Priyank Kharge's resignation

MANGALURU, 28 AUG

BJP MLC Pratapsimha Nayak on Wednesday called for the resignation of Minister Priyank Kharge over the alleged allotment of a land to a trust run by his family including his father and Congress President M Mallikarjun Kharge. Speaking to reporters, Nayak said Kharge, who is the Minister for Electronics, IT/BT and Rural Development & Panchayat Raj in the Congress government should step down, accusing him of exerting undue influence in securing the Civic Amenity (CA) site to Siddhartha Vihar Trust, an organisation associated with Kharge family. The family has the best CA sites registered in their trust which is a 'scam', he claimed. Nayak also stated that Siddaramiah government was on a shaky pitch. *—PTI*

Stone pelted at Karnataka MLC's house, 2 arrested

MANGALURU, 28 AUG

Two people were arrested on Wednesday by Mangaluru City Police on charges of pelting stones at MLC Ivan D'Souza's house, police said. They have been identified as Bharat alias Yakshit and Dinesh Kurtamogeru, they said. The incident happened on 19 and 20 August. After the governor gave his assent to prosecute Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in the alleged MUDA land scam, Ivan D'Souza had allegedly remarked that a situation like the one in Bangladesh might also take place in Karnataka if the governor did not rescind the decision to prosecute Siddaramaiah. On the same day, Congress workers had allegedly gone berserk and stoned buses, injuring passengers. *—PTI*

9 K'taka students selected for World Skills Competition

BENGALURU, 28 AUG

The Karnataka Skill Development Corporation (KSDC) has selected nine students to represent India at the 47th World Skills Competition in Lyon, France, officials said on Wednesday. These individuals met with Minister for Medical Education and Skill Development Sharan Prakash Patil before embarking on their journey to France, they said. "Patil extended his best wishes to the students, encouraging them to seize this opportunity and bring glory to both the State and the nation by demonstrating their skills and winning medals. The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) organises the India Skills competition to identify and train candidates who will represent India at the World Skills Competition. *—PTI*

Will sort docs' issues in 30 days: Minister

Women doctors told Salar News they are sexually harassed and don't have basic facilities

VAISHNAVI GOPALRAJ
BENGALURU, 28 AUG

A survey carried out by **Salar News** among doctors in Karnataka to understand their working conditions revealed that trainee doctors working in Shivamogga, Mandya, Bagalkot and Bengaluru have to work for more than 24 hours continuously and there is neither space on hospital premises to relax nor a separate washroom for them. Harshini, a senior doctor from Shivamogga, said, "Since I am the only senior doctor at Taluk General Hospital in Bhadravathi, I have to stay round the clock at the hospital to take care of the patients. As we don't have a resting room, I take a break on a plastic chair."

Medical Education Minister Sharan Prakash Patil directed all State government medical colleges to use their own funds to improve infrastructure and immediately assess the functionality of CCTVs on campus, with a report to be submitted to Health Department.

Many incidents of inappropriate and predatory behaviour have been reported by women trainee doctors. Shalini, a senior resident doctor at Victoria Hospital, revealed that some male patients demand female doctors to treat them and they have erections during check-ups.

Medical Education Minister directed all State government medical colleges to use their own funds to improve infrastructure **PHOTO: ANI**

Aaruna, a senior resident doctor from Kushtagi Taluk Hospital shared the plight at their hostel. "The government hostel where I stay is in terrible condition, with leaky rooms, unhygienic surroundings and frequent power cuts."

Patil said they will sort out the issues raised by the survey conducted by **Salar News** systematically within 1 month. "I had a meeting with directors of government hospitals and trainee doctors on Tuesday where many of them raised similar issues. I have instructed the directors to provide transportation for the doctors."

The Medical Education Minister said, "During untoward incidents, we will either replace the treating doctor with a male doctor or halt the treatment. We will organise a meeting with the officials of government colleges and lawmakers to check whether we can register police complaints on untoward incidents immediately." *—Salar News*

Hospitals to get POSH committees

Medical Education Minister, Sharan Prakash Patil, has instructed all government and private hospitals to establish Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs) as mandated by the PoSH Act (Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act). Speaking to Salar News, Minister Patil said, "It is important for these committees in addressing issues related to sexual harassment within medical institutions I have discussed this directive with the head of departments (HODs) of medical colleges across State and urged to submit reports to the Karnataka State Women's Commission and these reports will be reviewed to identify problems." *—Salar News*

Ex-soldiers to enhance security at govt hospitals: Sharan Patil

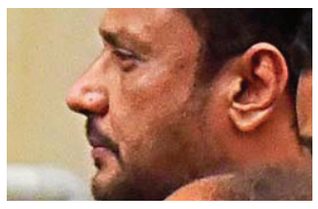
PHOTO: FB

I have directed the health department to initiate the process for hiring these trained professionals across the State. Alongside this, tenders for procuring armed equipment will also be issued

-Sharan Prakash Patil, Medical Education Minister

In a bid to improve security at government hospitals across the State, Health Department will soon announce a tender to appoint ex-army officials. Medical Education Minister Sharan Prakash Patil told Salar News, "I have directed the health department to initiate the process for hiring these trained professionals across the State. Alongside this, tenders for procuring armed equipment will also be issued." The minister said the plan includes deploying ex-army officials in key areas such as casualty, emergency wards, and hospital premises, and coordinating with the 112 helpline and local police stations for enhanced security. Currently, army officials are already providing security at Bengaluru Medical College, and similar measures will be implemented in government Hospitals State-wide. *—Salar News*

Darshan's custody extended till 9 Sept



Darshan Thoogudeepa **PHOTO: PTI**

BENGALURU, 28 AUG

A court on Wednesday extended till 9 September the judicial custody of Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa along with his friend Pavithra Gowda and others, who are accused in the Renukaswamy murder case.

All the 17 accused, including Darshan and Pavithra, were produced before the magistrate court through video conferencing from Bengaluru and Tumakuru prisons, where they are lodged, as their judicial custody ended today.

The extension of judicial custody follows a remand application filed by the Police.

Security beefed up in Parappana Agrahara

In the aftermath of actor Darshan and three other rowdy sheeters enjoying coffee with cigarettes, the prison officials have introduced a slew of fool proof measures which came into effect on Wednesday.

Home Minister G Parameshwara who held meetings with officials in the wake of the developments has it is learnt given the nod for installation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered CCTV cameras in and around the jail premises to monitor the movements of inmates.

All visitors to the prison facility are to be frisked thoroughly and all belongings they carry are to be checked for contraband, mobile phones, SIM cards and other electronic devices. Food and garbage trucks are to be monitored every day to weed out the smuggling of narcotics and mobile phones.

It is also learnt that the authorities have also decided not to release prisoners after dawn despite them getting bail orders from the court around 6 pm or 6.30 pm. This move is to prevent retaliatory attacks outside the jail premises under the cover of darkness in a tit for tat to seek revenge by the gangsters against each other. Even if there is a court order ordering the release of a prisoner it would be implemented only at 10 am the next day. *—Salar News*

Rowdy Naga to be moved to another jail

Bengaluru, 28 Aug

In a significant move to be implemented in the next couple of days notorious gangster Nagaraj alias Wilson Garden Naga is to be shifted to another prison in the State. Naga was the one seen in the lawns of the central prison along with actor Darshan. The police have for the second time sought to move Naga out of the Parappana Agrahara as he has begun to rule the roost there with 24 of his gang members. According to sources there is fear among jail authorities that Naga and his accomplices would take over the day-to-day functioning of the jail and also affect the probe into killing of his rival.

——Salar News

SC halts termination of PSU employees

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

Supreme Court on Wednesday came to the rescue of some employees of the central government and PSU banks, who were facing the threat of termination on the ground that their castes, which were added to the list of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, were later de-scheduled by the Karnataka government.

"We hold that the proposed action of the respondent banks/undertakings in issuing notice(s) to the appellants to show cause as to why their services may not be terminated cannot be sustained and are hereby quashed," said a bench comprising Justices Hima Kohli and Sandeep Mehta while setting aside a Karnataka High Court judgment.

The employees belonging to the Kotegara Scheduled Caste and Kuruba Scheduled Tribe, including K Nirmala, were asked to respond to notices issued by their respective employers -- Canara Bank, Oriental Insurance Company Limited and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited.

The PSU employers had said the castes and tribes of these employees are no longer part of the SCs and STs and hence, they cannot be allowed to remain in their jobs, which were earned under reserved categories.

Deciding a batch of petitions, the bench said the common thread is whether a person, who joined the services of a nationalised bank or a Government of India undertaking based on an SC or ST certificate in Karnataka, according to the state's decision, would be entitled to retain the position after the caste or tribe has been de-scheduled.

The verdict referred to a judgment and said the State government has no authority to amend or modify the list of SCs and STs published under Articles 341 and 342 of the Constitution. *—PTI*

HC refuses to cancel HD Revanna's bail

BENGALURU, 28 AUG

High Court on Wednesday declined Special Investigation Team's (SIT) plea to cancel the bail granted to JD(S) leader HD Revanna, who is facing charges in connection with the abduction of a woman from KR Nagar, Mysuru district. Revanna, was initially granted bail by the special court for people's representatives on 13 May.

Justice M Nagaprasanna, presiding over the single judge bench, rejected SIT's petition, which sought to overturn the bail order. Meanwhile, the court granted bail to several co-accused in the case on Wednesday, including Satish Babanna, Madhu Gowda, KA Rajagopal, HN Madhu, HK Sujay, and ST Keerthi. The decision follows the earlier bail granted to Revanna's wife, Bhavani, who is also implicated in the same case.

Senior Advocate, Ravivarma Kumar, representing the SIT, had argued for the cancellation of Revanna's bail, asserting that his release could potentially influence the investigation. However, the court dismissed these concerns and upheld the bail granted by the special court. A detailed judgment outlining the court's reasoning is expected to be released soon.

Senior Advocate CV Nagesh, representing Revanna, argued that the prosecution's bid to cancel bail was unfounded, as the kidnapping charge was baseless. *—Salar News*

JD(S) sweeps Mandya CMC polls; retains Prez post

MYSURU, 28 AUG

In a setback to Congress, JD(S) successfully retained both president and vice president posts of the Mandya City Municipal Council (CMC) after Congress lured three of its members through Operation Hasta.

JD(S)'s Nagesh and BJP's Arun Kumar was elected to the president and vice president posts respectively.

The winners secured 19 votes while the defeated Congress candidate HS Manju and Jakir Pasha managed to secure only 18 votes each.

The elections were held on Wednesday, following the announcement of reservation for the posts of president and vice president by the government recently.

JD(S) was able to retain power with Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy turning up to cast his vote and luring a Congress member to vote for the party candidate.

As many as 35 members were elected to the Mandya CMC which was held over 35 wards. As the three JD(S) members defected to Congress , it fielded Manju and Jakir with the support of three defected JD(S) members with independents and local MLA Ganiga Ravikumar. *—Salar News*

Another complaint against CM

MYSURU, 28 AUG

RTI activist Snehamayi Krishna on Wednesday filed a complaint against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi and KPCC spokesperson M Lakshman at Lakshmipuram Police station in the City accusing them on charges of creating fake documents and destroying MUDA files. In a complaint, he stated that the CMs wife Parvathi allegedly destroyed the original appeal letter she had submitted to MUDA seeking alternative sites, and incorporated a new letter written by her to MUDA files by influencing her power. Meanwhile, KPCC spokesperson M Lakshman who addressed a press conference at City Congress office, accused RTI activist Snehamayi Krishna as a rowdy sheeter and a blackmailer.

A total of 44 cases were filed against Snehamayi Krishna for blackmailing individuals at different police stations including 17 in Mysuru Krishnaraja Police Station. *—Salar News*

CM's prosecution hearing today

Bengaluru, 28 Aug

Karnataka High Court is set to resume hearing on Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's petition challenging the legality of the Governor Thaawarchand's sanction for his prosecution in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority case on Thursday. The Governor on 16 August accorded sanction under Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 and Section 218 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023. *—PTI*

VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS

BBMP must sterilise more stray dogs: Activists

MEGHANA PRASAD
BENGALURU, 28 AUG

The death of a 76-year-old retired teacher from Bihar after being attacked by a pack of stray dogs during her morning walk in Jalahalli on Wednesday has raised questions about BBMP's sterilisation programme to control the population of canines and measures to rehabilitate them.

Bengaluru is home to around 3 lakh stray dogs, according to data from Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP). Speaking to **Salar News**, Dr Ravikumar, Joint Director of Animal Husbandry Department of BBMP, said "Through Animal Birth Control programme, we have sterilised and vaccinated around 40,000 strays this year and are trying to increase it by 50,000 by the end of this year."

PHOTO: PIXABAY

Animal welfare experts said while sterilisation is essential, the current pace of the programme is inadequate. "BBMP needs to step up its efforts by partnering with more animal welfare organisations and allocating more resources for sterilisation drives," Thejeshwar B, Animal Welfare Warden, Karnataka Animal Welfare Board, and Board Member, Second Chance Sanctuary, Sarjapura, told **Salar News**.

BBMP has increased patrolling in areas with high stray dog populations and intensified efforts to capture and rehabilitate aggressive dogs. Ravikumar adds, "While we have made progress, we need more resources and better coordination to meet our goals. We are working on setting up additional animal shelters to accommodate stray dogs that need rehabilitation."

Thejeshwar said the public can join in BBMP's efforts by ensuring that their community dogs are sterilised. "Even the feeding areas can be limited to least populated areas," he said.

To address complaints related to stray dogs, BBMP has a dedicated helpline (080-22660000) and mobile app (Namma Bengaluru Sahaaya 2.0). *—Salar News*

ROW ERUPTS OVER CERTIFICATES PRINTED WITH JESUS IN MYSURU

MYSURU, 28 AUG

- The issue came to light following a viral video on social media. Certificates were distributed to at least 700 participants of over 16 PU colleges

Sports winners' certificates printed with Jesus Christ photo distributed to the pre-university college students of Hanur taluk in Chamarajanagar triggered a controversy on Wednesday.

The issue came to light following a viral video on social media. Certificates were distributed to at least 700 participants of over 16 PU colleges. Speaking to **Salar News**, the Deputy Director of Public Instruction Manjunath said that he issued the show cause notice for this incident. He also mentioned the incident hurt the religious sentiments. Both the colleges had scanned his WhatsApp signature and distributed the winner's certificate without bringing it to his notice. He informed that all the 700 certificates were withdrawn. "Fresh certificates with government logos will be distributed soon," Manjunath said. The event was organised by the pre-university education department, Kristaraja Pre University College and St Mary's Pre University College on 9 August. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: PTI

UCC to be executed in Uttarakhand before 9 Nov: CM

DEHRADUN, 28 AUG

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Wednesday said that the government has resolved to implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in the state before November 9, the foundation day of the Uttarakhand. Notably, the state was carved out of Uttar Pradesh on November 9 in the year 2000 during the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led central government. It was initially named Uttaranchal, which was changed to Uttarakhand on 1 January, 2007. "We have taken many such decisions which were not implemented by the previous governments till date due to vote bank politics. The UCC bill will be implemented soon. We have resolved to implement it before the 9th of November, in the state," Dhami said *—ANI*

Assam Oppn file FIR against CM for 'promoting enmity'

GUWAHATI, 28 AUG

Opposition parties of Assam on Wednesday filed a first information report (FIR) against Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, accusing him of 'promoting enmity' based on religion and race.

They accused Sarma of attempting to incite communal tension by targeting a specific community, potentially leading to riot-like situations in the state. The FIR was filed by Lurinjyoti Gogoi, general secretary of the United Opposition Forum Assam (UOFA), at Dispur police station. Gogoi was accompanied by leaders of other parties of the Forum. The UOFA is an alliance of 18 parties in Assam, aligned with the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA). "We are lodging this FIR against Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma, who happens to be the Chief Minister of the state," the FIR read. *—PTI*

RSS Chief gets Amit-Shah level ASL security

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has strengthened RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's security by upping his existing 'Z+' armed protection to the more robust Advanced Security Liaison (ASL) protocol. This upgrade involves augmenting the security measures currently provided by Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel. The ASL status brings Bhagwat's security level on par with that of Home Minister Amit Shah. Officials told ANI that the new directions were issued on 16 August considering fresh threat analysis report submitted to the MHA by the Intelligence Bureau. They said that the ASL protocol was previously required only during Bhagwat's visits to certain sensitive locations. All states and Union Territories have been informed of the security upgrade. *—ANI*

Cong leader Singhvi elected unopposed to RS from T'gana

HYDERABAD, 28 AUG

Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi has been elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha from Telangana in a bypoll. Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) Senior Vice President G Niranjan received the certificate of election on behalf of Singhvi from the returning officer here. An independent candidate had filed nomination for the bypoll, but it was rejected during scrutiny. Singhvi was the sole candidate in the fray and he was announced as elected on Tuesday, the last date for withdrawal of candidatures. Singhvi had filed his nomination on 19 August. Earlier this year, Singhvi had lost the Rajya Sabha election from Congress-ruled Himachal Pradesh. *—PTI*

BJP bandh in WB sees sporadic violence

Several BJP leaders detained; bullets fired

KOLKATA, 28 AUG

Sporadic instances of violence marked the BJP-sponsored 12-hour shutdown in West Bengal on Wednesday which had a mixed impact in the wake of bandh supporters clashing with the police and ruling Trinamool Congress workers at several pockets of the state.

The most significant of these clashes was reported from Bhatpara in North 24 Parganas district where the BJP alleged that TMC goons fired multiple rounds on its local leader Priyangu Pandey's car and shared a purported video of the crime on social media platforms.

Although Pandey escaped unhurt, the vehicle's driver and a party worker sustained bullet injuries on their heads and were admitted to a private hospital, BJP leaders claimed.

Police said that the two men were beaten up by some people outside the local Anglo-India Jute Mill.

The violence was followed by a showdown between local BJP leader Arjun Singh and his TMC counterpart Somnath Shyam, with both leaders and their supporters standing face to face in altercation further triggering tensions and the police finding it tough to disperse the warring groups.

Police personnel detain an agitator during BJP's 12-hour general strike in Bengal to protest the police action against participants of Tuesday's "Nabanna Abhiyan" rally, on Wednesday PHOTO: PTI

Several BJP leaders, including former MPs Roopa Ganguly and Locket Chatterjee, Rajya Sabha MP Samik Bhattacharya and MLA Agnimitra Paul, were detained for blocking roads and urging people to enforce the bandh since morning.

Meanwhile, Calcutta High Court on Wednesday dismissed a plea against the 12-hour 'Bangla Bandh' called by the BJP since the petitioner was debarred perpetually from filing public interest litigations (PIL) before the court in a previous order.

Petitioner Sanjoy Das, who claimed to be a lawyer practising at the high court, sought that bandh be declared illegal.

CBI starts polygraph test on Kolkata Police ASI

CBI began the process of conducting a polygraph test on Kolkata Police ASI Anup Dutta to decipher his alleged links with Sanjay Roy, arrested in rape and murder case.

Dutta will be the eighth person to undergo a polygraph test in this case.

The CBI is trying to find out if Roy informed Dutta about the crime he allegedly committed and whether he sought any favours for covering up the crime, the officials said. *—PTI*

Droupadi Murmu PHOTO: PTI

'ENOUGH IS ENOUGH': MURMU ON RAPE CASES

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

Declaring that "enough is enough", President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday said it is time for India to wake up to the "perversion" of crimes against women and counter the mindset that sees women as "less powerful, less capable, less intelligent".

"Those who share such views then go further and see the female as an object... We owe it to our daughters to remove the hurdles from their path of winning the freedom from fear," Murmu said in an exclusive signed article for PTI. Murmu said no civilised society can allow daughters and sisters to be subjected to such atrocities. "The nation is bound to be outraged, and so am I," she wrote.

The hard-hitting and personalised article, titled "Women's Safety: Enough is Enough", is the first time the president has articulated her views on Kolkata incident that has once again shaken the conscience of the nation and led to widespread, continuing protests. *—PTI*

PROPERTIES SEIZED

ED fines ₹908 cr against DMK MP in FEMA case

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

The Enforcement Directorate on Wednesday said a penalty of Rs 908 crore has been slapped in a case related to the alleged violation of foreign exchange rules against DMK MP S Jagathratchakan and his family members.

The federal agency issued a statement which said that properties worth Rs 89.19 crore, seized in September 2020, have been confiscated following an adjudication order issued on 26 August under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA).

Jagathratchakan, 76, represents the Arakkonam Lok Sabha seat in Tamil Nadu. He has earlier served as a minister of state for Information and Broadcasting in the Union government.

The agency said a FEMA violation probe was initiated against the MP, a businessman from Tamil Nadu, his family members and a related Indian entity.

This investigation, it said, resulted in the passing of seizure order, dated September 11, 2020, under section 37A of FEMA, for various movable and immovable properties in the name of the MP and his family members. These are valued at Rs 89.19 crore.

S Jagathratchakan PHOTO: PTI

"The properties worth Rs 89.19 crore which were seized in terms of section 37A of FEMA were also ordered for confiscation, and penalty of Rs 908 crore is levied vide Adjudication Order dated 26/08/2024," the ED said.

The ED said the noticees (Jagathratchakan and family) filed individual writ petitions before the Madras High Court.

While there was no immediate reaction from the DMK leader on the latest ED action, his party president and Tamil Nadu chief minister M K Stalin had criticised the BJP government when the Income Tax department conducted a raid in 2023. *—PTI*

A statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, erected by the Navy and inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi last year, collapsed at Rajkot Fort, in Maharashtra PHOTO: PTI

Ajit Pawar apologises, workers clashed over Shivaji statue collapse

MUMBAI, 28 AUG

Shiv Sena (UBT) workers and supporters of BJP MP Narayan Rane clashed on Wednesday at a fort in Sindhudurg district of Maharashtra where the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj had collapsed.

A police constable was injured as stones were hurled by some persons, an official said. The clash was triggered by the near-simultaneous arrival of Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray and the Thackeray family's arch-rival and Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg MP Narayan Rane at the Rajkot fort.

The 35-foot statue of the 17th century Maratha empire founder, unveiled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 4 last year, collapsed on 26 August afternoon. The statue collapse incident snowballed into a political controversy with the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) targeting the Mahayuti government and seeking Eknath Shinde's resignation.

The police and security personnel struggled to bring the situation under control amid heightened tension. He was rushed to the primary health centre in Malvan, a police official said.

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar also apologised to people of Maharashtra. *—PTI*

5 M'rashtra sugar mills linked to BJP-NCP get ₹487 cr funds

MUMBAI, 28 AUG

The Maharashtra cooperation department has dropped from its list of margin fund beneficiaries five cooperative sugar mills associated with the opposition leaders and added in their place those linked to the politicians of the ruling BJP and NCP for an award of Rs 487 crore funds.

This decision was made during a cabinet meeting held soon after the Lok Sabha election results.

The government revised the list by removing the names of the sugar mills controlled by opposition leaders who did not support the ruling alliance during the elections, and replaced them with five zother units with the Mahayuti. The new additions in the list are: Shetkari Sahakari Sakhar Karkhana in Ausa tehsil of Latur district, Vishwasrao Naik Cooperative Sugar Mill in Sangli district, Padmabhushan Krantiveer Dr Nagnath Nayakawadi Hutatma Kisan Ahir Cooperative Sugar Mill in Sangli, Ashok Cooperative Sugar Mill in Shrirampur tehsil of Ahmednagar district and Shri Vitthal Cooperative Sugar Mill in Pandharpur tehsil if Solapur district. *—PTI*

This decision was made during a cabinet meeting held soon after the Lok Sabha election results PHOTO: ANI

MODI HAILS 10 YEARS OF JAN DHAN YOJANA

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

As the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana completed 10 years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said the scheme personifies dignity, empowerment and the opportunity to participate in the economic life of the nation.

Modi also hailed those who worked to make the Jan Dhan Yojana a success, and said the scheme has been paramount in boosting financial inclusion.

"Today, we mark a momentous occasion - #10YearsOfJanDhan. Congratulations to all the beneficiaries and compliments to all those who worked to make this scheme a success," the prime minister said in a post on X. *—PTI*

Champai under own govt's watch: Assam CM

GUWAHATI, 28 AUG

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday alleged that Jharkhand minister Champai Soren had been under "surveillance of his own government" for last five months.

"He has decided to join BJP on 30 August, but he is yet to resign and remains a minister. Soren had been put under surveillance five months ago, even before he was in talks with BJP," Sarma said.

> My decision (to join BJP) is in the interest of Jharkhand... I am used to struggles
>
> Champai Soren, Former Jharkhand chief minister

Soren resigned from the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) saying he was forced to take such a step as he was aggrieved by the party's present style of functioning and policies.

Soren on Wednesday also clarified that his decision to join BJP was taken in the interest of Jharkhand and he will resign from the JMM and as minister. Only BJP seems serious on the infiltration issue and other parties are ignoring it for the sake of vote bank politics, he said, explaining why he decided to join the saffron party. *—PTI*

IN 10 STATES

Govt to set up 12 industrial cities at ₹28,602 cr to boost mfg

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

The government on Wednesday approved 12 new industrial cities in 10 states on the lines of Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh and Dholera in Gujarat to boost domestic manufacturing with an estimated investment of Rs 28,602 crore.

These industrial areas will be in Khurpia in Uttarakhand, Rajpura-Patiala in Punjab, Dighi in Maharashtra, Palakkad in Kerala, Agra and Prayagraj in UP, Gaya in Bihar, Zaheerabad in Telangana, Orvakal and Kopparthy in AP, and Jodhpur-Pali in Rajasthan, and one in Haryana.

A decision in this regard was taken in a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi here.

The Cabinet "has approved 12 new project proposals under the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme (NICDP) with an estimated investment of Rs 28,602 crore", Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said after the meeting.

These projects will create an investment potential of about Rs 1.52 lakh crore.

These projects will help to create an investment potential of about Rs 1.52 lakh crore PHOTO: PTI

- The Cabinet "has approved 12 new project proposals under the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme with an estimated investment of Rs 28,602 crore", Union Minister said

The decision followed the announcement by the government in the Budget for the development of 'plug and play' industrial parks in or near 100 cities in partnership with states and the private sector to boost manufacturing.

Eight such cities are already under different stages of implementation.

Trunk infrastructure has been created in four cities -- Dholera (Gujarat), Auric (Maharashtra), Vikram Udyogpuri (Madhya Pradesh) and Krishnapatnam (Andhra Pradesh) and allotment of land plots is underway for the industry. *—PTI*

Full list of industrial cities planned:

- Khurpia in Uttarakhand
- Rajpura, Patiala in Punjab
- Agra in Uttar Pradesh
- Prayagraj in UP
- Gaya in Bihar
- Eighi Port Industrial Area in Maharashtra
- Eighi Port Industrial Area in Maharashtra
- Jodhpur, Pali in Rajasthan.
- Koparthy in Andhra Pradesh
- Orvakal in Andhra Pradesh
- Zaheerabad in Telangana
- Palakkad in Kerala
- Jamshedpur Purulia-Asansol

—PTI

MEHBOOBA NOT TO CONTEST J-K POLLS

SRINAGAR, 28 AUG

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Wednesday said she will not contest the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir, pointing out that she would not be able to fulfil her party's agenda in the union territory set up even if she were to become the chief minister.

"I have been chief minister of a government with the BJP which revoked FIRs against 12,000 persons (in 2016). Can we do that now? I, as the chief minister of a government with (PM) Modi, wrote a letter to separatists to invite them for talks. Can you do that today? I got a ceasefire (implemented) on ground. Can you do that today? If you cannot take back an FIR as chief minister, what does one do with such a post?" she said. The PDP President was asked if she has had a change of heart on contesting the polls after vice president of arch-rival National Conference Omar Abdullah made a U-turn on his stand of not participating in the polls till Jammu and Kashmir was a union territory.

Omar Abdullah, who had vowed not to take part in assembly polls till Jammu and Kashmir remained a union territory, was among 32 candidates named by party. *—PTI*

Will fight for justice, says Kavitha after bail

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

A day after her release from jail in the Delhi excise policy case, BRS leader K Kavitha on Wednesday said she believes that justice will prevail and will continue her legal fight.

Kavitha, the daughter of former Telangana chief minister K Chandrashekar Rao, was released from the Tihar jail after Supreme Court granted her bail in corruption and money laundering cases linked to the now-scrapped 2021-22 excise policy. Upon her release from jail, she had said,

"I will absolutely take the battle forward", signalling her intention to continue challenging the charges against her.

Kavitha, 46, was in jail since her arrest by the Enforcement Directorate on March 15 in a money laundering case linked to the alleged excise policy scam. The Central Bureau of Investigation later arrested her in the main corruption case on 11 April.

The bench granted her bail in both the cases and questioned the central probe agencies over the fairness of their investigation and asked if they were free to "pick and choose" an accused. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

UP court sentences man to 20 years of for raping minor

BAHRAICH, 28 AUG

A special court here has sentenced a man to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment for raping a 16-year-old girl in 2017. The POCSO court also imposed a fine of Rs 77,000 on the convict, Shyam Sundar, said Special District Government Advocate Sant Pratap Singh. Singh said the victim's father lodged a complaint at Sujauli police station alleging that Sundar kidnapped and raped his daughter on 26 November, 2017. Based on the complaint, an FIR was registered against Sundar on 11 December 2017, he said. On Tuesday, Special Additional Sessions Judge Deepakant Mani convicted Sundar and sentenced him to 20 years of imprisonment, Singh said. *—PTI*

245 injured in Dahi Handi celebrations in Mumbai

MUMBAI, 28 AUG

A total of 245 'Govindas' or youngsters involved in forming human pyramids as part of the 'Dahi Handi' celebrations were injured in Mumbai a day ago, civic officials said on Wednesday. Of these injured people, 32 were admitted to various hospitals, while 213 were discharged after treatment, they said. The Dahi Handi, a part of the Janmashtami festival saw enthusiastic participation by revellers. As part of the celebrations, Govindas form multi-tiered human pyramids to break Dahi Handis suspended mid-air. Eleven of them were admitted to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC)-run KEM Hospital, four each at a medical facility in Rajawadi and Sion Hospital, one at JJ Hospital, an official said. *—PTI*

Pakistani Christian is first Goan to get CAA citizenship

PANAJI, 28 AUG

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Wednesday handed over the Indian citizenship certificate to a 78-year-old Pakistani Christian under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, making him the first such person from the coastal state. Joseph Francis Pereira went from Goa to Pakistan for studies before liberation and subsequently took up a job there. He attained Pakistani citizenship and lived in Karachi before returning to India in 2013. The Chief Minister said that though Pereira was married to a Goan woman, he faced hurdles in getting Indian citizenship till the central government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi amended the Citizenship Act, 1955. He gave the certificate to Pereira in the presence of state tourism minister Rohan Khaunte. *—PTI*

UP girls found hanging died by suicide, says police

FARRUKHABAD, 28 AUG

A day after the bodies of two Dalit girls were found outside a village in Uttar Pradesh's Fatehgarh, a panel of doctors on Wednesday pointed towards suicide, saying they died due to hanging. The Dalit girls, aged 15 and 18, had left their homes on August 26 around 10 pm to visit a nearby temple on the occasion of Janmashtami but did not return, police on Tuesday said, adding that they were residents of the Bhagautipur village. "The postmortem was conducted by a panel of doctors. They (girls) died due to hanging. No external injury marks have been found of the bodies," Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Avnindra Singh said. The doctor panel has sent slides of vaginal fluid to laboratory to rule out the possibility of rape, the CMO said. *—PTI*

Mollywood mayhem: 17 cases filed so far

Actor Minu Muneer says she received threat messages on social media for speaking out

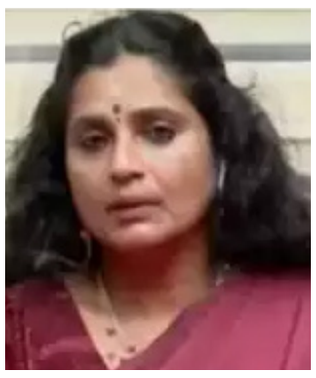
T'PURAM, 28 AUG

A total of 18 cases have now been registered in connection with sexual harassment allegations in the Malayalam film industry which led to the dissolution of Association of Malayalam Movie Artists (AMMA).

On Tuesday, AMMA was dissolved after a 235-page report by the Justice Hema committee was released in its redacted form last week.

The latest complaint has been filed by actor Sonia Malhaar, who alleged that an actor molested her on a film set in 2013. The actor has lodged a complaint with the Special Investigation Team (SIT) formed by Kerala government to tackle the '#MeToo' storm in the film industry. She has however urged media not to link actor Jayasurya to her allegations.

Actor Minu Muneer, who had earlier accused actors M Mukesh, Jayasurya, Maniyanpilla Raju and Idavela Babu of harassment, has now said she is getting threat messages on social media after speaking out. She posted the screenshot of a threatening message she received. The SIT probing the harrassment matter will record her statement soon.



Minu Muneer; Sonia Malhaar

PHOTOS: FACEBOOK

KERALA'S ME TOO

The actor also alleged that former AMMA Secretary Idavela Babu called her over to his flat on the pretense of helping her get an AMMA membership and physically abused her. She also alleged that actor CPM MLA Mukesh, has denied her the membership after she turned down his advances. Actors Baburaj, directors Ranjith, Thulasidas and VA Shrikumar are the other celebrities who are facing sexual assault allegations.

According to sources, SIT would interrogate director Ranjith, who is accused of misbehaving with Bengali actor Sreelekha Mitra. *—Agencies*

Are other language industries in India even talking about such things? It has been heartbreaking to read the findings of the committee. More heartbreaking because it is familiar. Maybe not every detail and not every nitty gritty but the larger picture of what the women have testified to is all too familiar

Swara Bhasker, Actor

Oppn slams govt inaction, raises five questions

Pinarayi Vijayan, VD Satheesan

PHOTO: ANI

MALAPPURAM, 28 AUG

In a scathing attack on the Left government in Kerala, the Congress-led Opposition on Wednesday raised five pointed questions on the Hema committee report, alleging a blatant cover-up and accusing the Pinarayi Vijayan-headed dispensation of shielding key persons by glossing over crucial facts.

Leader of Opposition in the State Assembly, VD Satheesan, alleged that the government is on the defensive regarding the Hema Committee report.

Satheesan said the Opposition is demanding answers to five key questions: "Why hasn't the government investigated the crimes revealed in the Hema Committee report? Why hasn't action been taken against those who committed crimes against women and children, despite laws stating that covering up sexual offences is a crime?

"Who is the government trying to protect by removing pages and paragraphs from the Hema Committee report before it was provided under the RTI Act? What action has been taken on the widespread use of drugs and narcotics in the film industry, which was described in the Hema Committee Report? And why is the government taking a stance against women?"

As Congress and BJP in Kerala continued to demand the resignation of actor and CPI(M) MLA M Mukesh, who faces sexual harassment allegations, he received some support from the Left government, with Minister AK Saseendran saying everyone should be given the opportunity to prove their innocence. *—PTI*

I am an unabashed admirer and supporter of Malayalam movie industry But this needs to be said about AMMA - the Association of Movie Artistes - it was your responsibility and you had the power - to create a safe working environment and to protect women - you failed to do that! that is simply unforgivable

Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Former Union Minister

Kudos to the women who have stood their ground and emerged victorious. #HemaCommittee was much needed to break the abuse. But will it? Abuse, asking for sexual favours, and expecting women to compromise to gain a foothold or accelerate their careers exist in every field. Why is a woman alone expected to go through the grind? Although men too face it, it's marginally women who bear the brunt

Khushbu Sundar, Actor-politician

Vadodara remains flooded for 2nd day, Army called in

VADODARA, 28 AUG

With many parts of Gujarat's Vadodara city remaining inundated on the second consecutive day, the situation is "alarming" and the Army has been called in to carry out relief and rescue work, the state government said on Wednesday.

More than 38,000 food packets have been distributed and another one lakh packets are ready for distribution, the minister informed.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi PM Narendra Modi on Wednesday had a telephonic conversation with Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and assured the later of all possible support and assistance from the Central government.

20,000 people were evacuated and 1,500 rescued in different districts as administration carried out relief and rescue operations on a large scale.

Army personnel rescue stranded people from inundated Sama locality of Vadodara on Wednesday PHOTO: PTI

Mizoram

The Mizoram government has ordered the closure of schools in four districts due to heavy rain, officials said. District administrations of Aizawl, Lunglei, Hnahthial and Mamit have issued separate public notices on Wednesday stating that all schools will remain closed as a precautionary measure due tinclement weather conditions and torrential rain in the districts.

Bihar

The Patna district administration in Bihar ordered the closure of 76 government schools in rural areas till 31 August, as the water level of the Ganga crossed the danger mark.

The decision has been taken for the safety of students and teachers, it said.

Jammu and Kashmir

The body of a six-year-old girl was recovered in a village in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district on Wednesday, taking the death toll in the incident to three, even as the search operation to locate the remaining four people continues, officials said. *—PTI*

HC asks Centre and ASI to produce docu on Jama Masjid

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

The Delhi High Court directed the Union culture ministry and the ASI on Wednesday to positively produce before it a file containing the decision of then prime minister Manmohan Singh that the historic Mughal-era Jama Masjid should not be declared a protected monument.

The court said if the authorities fail to place the documents, which are reportedly missing, before it, action would be initiated against the officials concerned.

"These are important documents which are in your custody and you have to keep them safely. This is very serious and we will take action against the officials if the documents are missing," a bench of Justices Prathiba M Singh and Amit Sharma said. *—PTI*

LAUNCHED ON 16 AUG

India's first space-borne precision receiver commences operations

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Wednesday said that the GNSS-Reflectometry (GNSS-R) instrument that represents "a new mode of remote sensing" on the EOS-08 satellite has commenced operations.

The instrument, developed by the Space Applications Centre (SAC-ISRO), is India's first space-borne precision receiver, according to ISRO.

The space agency on 16 August had successfully launched the Earth Observation Satellite EOS-08 on board the third developmental flight of small satellite launch vehicle SSLV-D3.

GNSS-R commenced operations on 18 August.

The raw data is being processed at the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC-ISRO) in Shadnagar, Hyderabad, using algorithms and data processing software developed by the Space Applications Centre (SAC-ISRO), Ahmedabad, and multiple levels of data products have been successfully generated, it said.

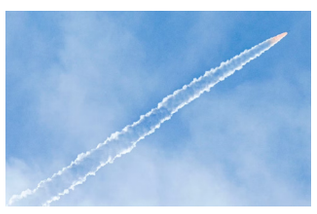


PHOTO: PTI

Noting that signals from Global and Regional Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS/RNSS), such as GPS and NavIC, are reflected off various Earth surfaces, including oceans, agricultural lands, and river bodies, ISRO said, these reflected signals are collected by a precision receiver onboard the satellite as it orbits the Earth at an altitude of 475km.

This measurement system operates without dedicated transmitters and is shallow in resource consumption-requiring minimal size, weight, and power, it said. Additionally, it can scale up as a constellation of receivers for faster coverage, making this innovative remote-sensing mode highly useful. The instrument provides a resolution of 15 km x 15 km over oceans and better than 1 km x 1 km over land, it said. *—PTI*

Video shows group throwing cows into MP river; 4 booked

SATNA , 28 AUG

A video of several cows being thrown into a swollen river in Satna district of Madhya Pradesh by a group of persons has gone viral on social media, prompting the police to register a case against four men.

As per the preliminary reports, 15 to 20 cows have died in the incident that occurred on Tuesday under the Nagod police station limits, but the information is yet to be verified, police said on Wednesday.

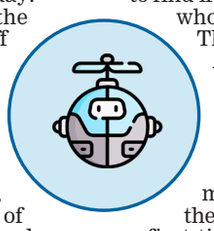
"A video showing cows being thrown into the Satna river under a railway bridge near Bamhor surfaced on Tuesday evening. Taking cognisance of the video, a police team was sent to the spot to collect information, following which a case was registered," Nagod police station in-charge Ashok Pandey said. *—PTI*

Drone-like objects cause flight delays in Amritsar

AMRITSAR, 28 AUG

Flight services at the airport here were disrupted for about three hours after the air traffic control (ATC) tower spotted a sudden movement of three objects resembling drones in the airspace, officials said on Wednesday.

This disrupted the landing and taking off operations of all the scheduled flights during the period, they said.



Speaking to PTI on Wednesday, Sandeep Aggarwal, officiating Director of Shri Guru Ramdas International Airport, said the incident happened on Monday at 10.10pm and movement of the drone-like objects was active almost for three hours.

He said the flight operations at the airport remained suspended from 10.10 pm to 12.45 am, after which the services were resumed following a clearance from the ATC tower.

Aggarwal said the airport authorities immediately informed the police after the movement of the drone-like objects was noticed.

The police, however, are yet to find if they were drones and who was operating them.

The help of the local Air Force station adjoining the airport was also sought in the matter, Aggarwal said.

He said the movement of such objects in the air was reported the first time here and it was a matter of deep concern for the authorities due to the close proximity of the airport to the Indo-Pak border. When contacted, SHO Airport, Harsimar said a complaint to the police had been made by the Airport Authority. *—PTI*

Data error robs villagers of PDS for 13 years

SHILLONG, 28 AUG

A village with over 50 households in Meghalaya's South West Khasi Hills district has not received foodgrains under the public distribution system for over 13 years, local MLA Renikton Tongkhar told the Assembly on Wednesday.

Tongkhar raised the issue during a call attention motion, referencing a newspaper report that highlighted how the villagers of Domtynrong have been deprived of food grains for more than a decade and have also been excluded from government schemes for over 20 years.

In response, Food and Civil Supplies Minister Comingone Ymbon acknowledged the issue, explaining that Domtynrong was inadvertently excluded from the state's public distribution system due to an error in the Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC) of 2011.

"In 2011, Domtynrong village was mistakenly classified as uninhabited leading to its exclusion from the NFSA beneficiary list," Ymbon said.

According to the Minister, attempts were made to rectify this error but the government of India maintains that any discrepancies in the database will only be resolved in the next SECC which is overdue since 2021.

He also said that state government will continue to engage with the Centre to reconsider revising the coverage limits to accommodate the leftout beneficiaries like those of Domtynrong. *—PTI*

CASES UP BY 2%

Student suicide rate has surpassed overall trend, population growth rate: Report

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

Incidents of student suicides in India have grown at an alarming annual rate, surpassing the population growth rate and overall suicide trends, according to a new report.

Based on the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, the "Student suicides: An epidemic sweeping India" report was launched on Wednesday at the Annual IC3 Conference and Expo 2024. The report pointed out that while the overall suicide numbers increased by 2 per cent annually, student suicides cases surged by 4 per cent, despite a likely "under reporting" of student suicide cases.

"Over the past two decades, student suicides have grown at an alarming annual rate of 4 per cent, double the national average. In 2022, male students constituted 53 per cent of the total student suicides. Between 2021 and 2022, male student suicides decreased by 6 per cent while female student suicides increased by 7 per cent," noted the report compiled by IC3 Institute.

"The incidence of student suicides continues to surpass both population growth rates and overall suicide trends.

Over the last decade, while the population of 0-24-year-olds reduced from 582 million to 581 million, the number of student suicides increased from 6,654 to 13,044," it added.

According to the report, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Madhya Pradesh are identified as the states with the highest number of student suicides, together accounting for one-third of the national total.

Southern states and union territories collectively contribute 29 per cent of these cases, while Rajasthan, known for its high-stakes academic environment, ranks 10th. Although the 2017 Mental Healthcare Act decriminalises suicide attempts for individuals with mental illness, the legacy of criminalisation continues to impact reporting practices, it said. *—PTI*

LA TOMATINA

People in Bunol, Spain celebrate traditional La Tomatina, the tomato throwing festival on Wednesday, The event saw a crowd of 20,000 people. It is said to be the biggest food fight in the world and it brings thousands of tourists to the region. ***PHOTO: THEOBJECTIVE***

Life expectancy rises as pollution drops by 19.3%

IN INDIA

The researchers attributed the decline in particulate levels in India and other South Asian countries primarily to favourable meteorological conditions and a reduced number of thermal inversions ***PHOTO: PTI***

India logged a 19.3 per cent decline in particulate pollution in 2022, the second highest in the world after Bangladesh, adding an average of one year to the life expectancy of citizens, a new report showed on Wednesday.

The annual report, "Air Quality Life Index" 2024, by the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago (EPIC) also said that Indians are likely to lose 3.6 years of life expectancy if the country fails to meet the World Health Organisation's (WHO) annual PM2.5 concentration standard of 5 micrograms per cubic metre.

The researchers attributed the decline in particulate levels in India and other South Asian countries primarily to favourable meteorological conditions and a reduced number of thermal inversions -- when a layer of warm air traps cooler air near the ground, causing pollution to build up.

PM2.5 concentrations in India in 2022 were around 9 micrograms per cubic metre (19.3 per cent) lower compared to 2021.

The most significant declines were observed in Purulia and Bankura districts of West Bengal, followed by Dhanbad, Purbi, Paschim Singhbhum, Paschim Medinipur and Bokaro districts in Jharkhand. In each of these districts, PM2.5 concentrations dropped by over 20 micrograms per cubic metre.

Despite the decline in pollution, 42.6 per cent of the Indian people live in areas which exceed the country's national air quality standard of 40 micrograms per cubic metre.

People in Delhi -- India's capital and most populous city -- would gain 7.8 years of life expectancy if all of India were to reduce particulate pollution to meet the WHO guideline. In North 24 Parganas -- the country's second most populous district -- people would gain 3.6 years of life expectancy, the report said.

It said that the northern plains, the most polluted region in India, saw a 17.2 per cent reduction in particulate levels in 2022 compared to 2021.

However, despite this improvement, the average resident in this region is still likely to lose about 5.4 years of life expectancy if the current pollution levels persist. On the other hand, if the decline in particulate levels continues at the same rate in the coming years, life expectancy in the northern plains could increase by 1.2 years.

Beyond the northern plains, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan have the highest burden of pollution in the country. On average, 292.3 million people living in these states are now losing 2.9 years of life expectancy.

"Our current national air quality standards fall short of protecting public health and must be revised in line with World Health Organisation guidelines. We have the tools and technologies to solve the air pollution crisis, what we need now is the political will to implement them," said Avinash Chanchal, Campaign Manager, Greenpeace India.

The report said that PM2.5 concentrations declined by 19 per cent on average in districts with cities covered by India's flagship programme on air quality management, the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), while districts not covered by the programme saw a 16 per cent decline.

However, barring Dhanbad, none of the districts with the highest decline in PM2.5 concentrations are covered by the NCAP framework.

Launched in 2019, the NCAP is India's first national effort to set clean air targets, aiming for a 20-30 per cent reduction in particulate pollution by 2024, using 2017 as the base year. The revised target is a 40 per cent reduction by 2026, with 2019-20 as the base year.

The programme covers 131 non-attainment cities, which consistently failed to meet the prescribed national ambient air quality standards between 2011 and 2015. If India meets the NCAP target, residents in non-attainment areas could see their life expectancy increase by two years compared to 2017. India's national average life expectancy would also increase by an additional 7.8 months as a result, it said.

The EPIC team emphasised that in India, where the annual PM2.5 standard is 40 micrograms per cubic metre, more than 40 per cent of the population breathes air that exceeds this standard. However, India is responding by implementing innovative policies. In 2019, Gujarat launched the world's first market for particulate pollution, which has since reduced pollution by 20-30 per cent in Surat and is rapidly expanding to other cities and states. These types of innovative policies demonstrate that it is possible to achieve improvements in air quality and people's health, without unduly impeding economic growth, the researchers said. The report also praised India's clean cooking programme, the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, saying that the decline in emissions from the residential sector in India can largely be attributed to the nationwide rollout of this scheme.

—PTI

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR سالار

Why Y chromosome is on the verge of extinction?

At several points in our tangled history, modern humans mated with Neanderthals.

This has left a telltale signature in the genomes of modern humans today, and this Neanderthal DNA impacts our health in myriad ways.

However, there's one part of our genome that lacks any Neanderthal DNA: the Y chromosome. But why?

According to experts some of that could be chance. But it's also possible that genes from Neanderthal males were incompatible with the female Homo sapiens carrying them. That would mean only female hybrids were able to reproduce.

The vanishing "Y"

The Y chromosome is one of two types of sex chromosomes in humans. Females carry two copies of the X chromosome, while males carry one X and one Y chromosome. The Y chromosome can only be passed from father to son.

At first, scientists had been analysing DNA taken from the fossilized remains of female Neanderthals. However, in 2016, a study published in the American Journal of Genetics examined a Neanderthal Y chromosome from a 49,000-year-old male from Spain.

"We've never observed the Neanderthal Y chromosome DNA in any human sample ever tested," Carlos Bustamante, co-senior study author and a population geneticist at Stanford University, said in a statement at the time.

So why might this Neanderthal DNA have seemingly vanished without a trace?

The simplest answer may be that it was randomly lost from the human gene pool over thousands of years.

"The amount of Neanderthal DNA in modern humans nowadays is relatively low so it could have been lost by drift," Fernando Mendez, lead study author, who at the time was a postdoctoral researcher at Stanford said.

Another possibility is that the Neanderthal Y chromosome was incompatible with our own DNA. For instance, the team discovered that three of the Neanderthal genes on the Y chromosome that differ from those found in humans function as part of the immune system. These genes allow the immune system to differentiate friend — aka the body's own cells — from foe. Failure to properly distinguish "self" from "invader" is why tissue transplants from men to women can be rejected or why a mother's immune system may attack a male fetus during pregnancy, causing miscarriage.

It's therefore conceivable that the immune systems of modern women consistently attacked male babies who carried Neanderthal DNA on their Y chromosome, leading to recurrent miscarriages and eventually the loss of Neanderthal Y genes.

If modern women who interbred with Neanderthals had fewer boys than other couples, then systematically the boys that live are likely to have fewer boys, Mendez told ABC News. This hypothesis aligns with an old theory called "Haldane's rule," which suggests that if breeding between genetically-different populations leads to infertility, it is likely to be in the sex — in this case male—that carries two different sex chromosomes.

This isn't the first time in our evolutionary history that the Neanderthal Y chromosome failed to compete with its modern human counterpart.

Between 550,000 and 765,000 years ago, the population that would give rise to Homo sapiens diverged from Neanderthals and another group of now extinct human relatives called Denisovans.

However, a study published in the journal Science in 2020 revealed that sometime between 370,000 and 100,000 years ago, Neanderthals and early modern humans interbred. By 100,000 years ago, the Neanderthal Y was completely replaced by the one from Homo sapiens.

Scientists don't know why this happened, Martin Petr, a co-senior study author and researcher and programmer at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, told Live Science. But a likely explanation, Petr hypothesized, is that for hundreds of thousands of years, Neanderthals had a very low population size compared with early modern humans. Low population sizes allow harmful mutations to accumulate within the gene pool at a higher rate than within a larger population, he said.

If you then introduce "healthier" early modern human DNA into the mix, natural selection would favor this modern human DNA, which would have then swept through the Neanderthal population. However, without a lot more genomic data from Neanderthals that would allow scientists to study the functional impact of inheriting this early modern human DNA, this is only a hypothesis, Petr said.

Unfortunately, it's still too early to definitively say why Neanderthal Y DNA was lost in both these instances, Adam Siepel, a computational biologist in New York, told Live Science in an email.

Courtesy,LiveScience

Experts say that genes from Neanderthal males were incompatible with the female Homo sapiens carrying them meaning only female hybrids were able to reproduce ***PHOTO: PIXABAY***

Dartmouth Conference 1956 : 68 years of AI revolution and its legacy

Imagine a group of young men gathered at a picturesque college campus in New England, in the United States, during the northern summer of 1956.

It's a small casual gathering. But the men are not here for campfires and nature hikes in the surrounding mountains and woods. Instead, these pioneers are about to embark on an experimental journey that will spark countless debates for decades to come and change not just the course of technology – but the course of humanity.

It is the Dartmouth Conference – the birthplace of artificial intelligence (AI) as we know it today.

What transpired here would ultimately lead to ChatGPT and the many other kinds of AI which now help us diagnose disease, detect fraud, put together playlists and write articles (well, not this one). But it would also create some of the many problems the field is still trying to overcome.

The summer that changed everything

In 1956, in a quiet corner of New Hampshire, a different kind of revolution was happening.

The Dartmouth Summer Research Project on Artificial Intelligence, often remembered as the Dartmouth Conference, kicked off on 18 June and lasted for about eight weeks. It was the brainchild of four American computer scientists – John McCarthy, Marvin Minsky, Nathaniel Rochester and Claude Shannon – and brought together some of the brightest minds in computer science, mathematics and cognitive psychology at the time.

These scientists, along with some of the 47 people they invited, set out to tackle an ambitious goal: to make intelligent machines.

As McCarthy put it in the conference proposal, they aimed to find out "how to make machines use language, form abstractions and concepts, solve kinds of problems now reserved for humans".

The birth of a field – and a problematic name

The Dartmouth Conference didn't just coin the term "artificial intelligence"; it coalesced an entire field of study. It's like a mythical Big Bang of AI – everything we know about machine learning, neural networks and deep learning now traces its origins back to that summer in New Hampshire.

But here's the thing: having settled on AI, no matter how much we try, today we can't seem to get away from comparing AI to human intelligence.

Oliver Selfridge, Nathaniel Rochester, Ray Solomonoff, Marvin Minsky, Trenchard More, John McCarthy, Claude Shannon, the brains behind Artificial Intelligence ***PHOTO: X/ @NOAHBOLANOWSKI***

This comparison is both a blessing and a curse.

On the one hand, it drives us to create AI systems that can match or exceed human performance in specific tasks. We celebrate when AI outperforms humans in games such as chess or Go, or when it can detect cancer in medical images with greater accuracy than human doctors.

On the other hand, this constant comparison leads to misconceptions.

When a computer beats a human at Go, it is easy to jump to the conclusion that machines are now smarter than us in all aspects – or that we are at least well on our way to creating such intelligence. But AlphaGo is no closer to writing poetry than a calculator.

And when a large language model sounds human, we start wondering if it is sentient.

But ChatGPT is no more alive than a talking ventriloquist's dummy.

The overconfidence trap

The scientists at the Dartmouth Conference were incredibly optimistic about the future of AI. They were convinced they could solve the problem of machine intelligence in a single summer.

This overconfidence has been a recurring theme in AI development, and it has led to several cycles of hype and disappointment.

Simon stated in 1965 that "machines will be capable, within 20 years, of doing any work a man can do". Minsky predicted in 1967 that "within a generation […] the problem of creating 'artificial intelligence' will substantially be solved". Popular futurist Ray Kurzweil now predicts it's only five years away: "we're not quite there, but we will be there, and by 2029 it will match any person".

Reframing our thinking: new lessons from Dartmouth

Instead of focusing on the race to "artificial general intelligence", we can focus on the unique strengths of the systems we have built – for example, the enormous creative capacity of image models.

Shifting the conversation from automation to augmentation is also important. Rather than pitting humans against machines, let's focus on how AI can assist and augment human capabilities.

We must also refocus research directions. Let's emphasise research into AI interpretability and robustness, interdisciplinary AI research and explore new paradigms of intelligence that aren't modelled on human cognition. Finally, we must manage our expectations about AI. Sure, we can be excited about its potential. But we must also have realistic expectations, so that we can avoid the disappointment cycles of the past.

As we look back at that summer camp 68 years ago, we can celebrate the vision and ambition of the Dartmouth Conference participants. Their work laid the foundation for the AI revolution we're experiencing today.

By reframing our approach to AI – emphasising utility, augmentation, ethics and realistic expectations – we can honour the legacy of Dartmouth while charting a more balanced and beneficial course for the future of AI.

After all, the real intelligence lies not just in creating smart machines, but in how wisely we choose to use and develop them.

Courtesy, The Conversation

PHOTO: AP

Japan prepares for powerful typhoon Shanshan

TOKYO, 28 AUG

Japan was preparing for powerful typhoon as it slowly approached the country's southwest at a bicycle speed, threatening to bring heavy rains and strong winds and causing airlines to cancel flights and train operators to delay or suspend services through the weekend. Typhoon Shanshan was at about 120 kilometres south of the southern island of Yakushima on Wednesday morning as it headed north toward Kyushu, packing winds of up to 180 kilometers per hour, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency. The agency said the typhoon is expected to reach southern Kyushu and possibly make landfall Thursday, and issued a high-level warning against violent winds, high waves and heavy rain for the Kagoshima prefecture. *—AP*

Pope visits East Timor after clergy abuse scandal

DILI, 28 AUG

When the Vatican acknowledged in 2022 that the Nobel Peace Prize-winning, East Timorese independence hero Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo had sexually abused young boys, it appeared that the global clergy sexual abuse scandal that has compromised the Catholic Church's credibility around the world had finally arrived in Asia's newest country. And yet, the church in East Timor today is stronger than ever, with most downplaying, doubting or dismissing the claims against Belo and those against a popular American missionary who confessed to molesting young girls. Many instead focus on their roles saving lives during the country's bloody struggle against Indonesia for independence. Pope Francis will come face to face with the Timorese faithful on his first trip to the country, a former Portuguese colony that makes up half of the island of Timor off the northern coast of Australia. *—AP*

24K Indian diaspora sign up for Modi's event in New York

NEW YORK, 28 AUG

More than 24,000 members of the Indian diaspora have signed up to attend a mega community event that will be addressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi here next month. The 'Modi & US' Progress Together' event will be held on 22 September at the Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, which has a capacity of 15,000. The Indo-American Community of USA (IACU) said Tuesday that over 24,000 Indian-Americans have signed up to attend the mega event, a community gathering that will be addressed by Modi. vModi is scheduled to address the high-level UN General Assembly session here on 26 September, according to a provisional list of speakers issued by the UN. *—PTI*

Egypt recovers 2 ancient artifacts, mummified head

CAIRO, 28 AUG

Egypt has recovered three ancient artifacts after they were smuggled out of the country and found in the Netherlands. Two of the items were for sale in an antiques shop, Egyptian authorities said on Tuesday. The items include a mummified head, a ceramic figurine, and the side of a wooden tomb. Dutch police and the cultural heritage inspection unit retrieved the figurines and parts of the tomb after determining that they were smuggled out of Egypt. A Dutch individual handed over the mummified head, which he had inherited from a family member, to local authorities. More than 30,000 artifacts have been recovered from around the world since 2014, say Egypt authorities. *—AP*

Israel conducts biggest raid on West Bank, 10 killed

The Israeli army sealed off Jenin and Tulkarem

Israel targets West bank killing at least nine Palestinians Terrorist. (inset) a map of the area **PHOTO: AJR**

JERUSALEM, 28 AUG

Israel launched raids across the occupied West Bank on Wednesday, where its forces killed at least nine Palestinians and sealed off the volatile city of Jenin, according to Palestinian officials.

Israel has carried out near-daily raids across the West Bank since Hamas' 7 October attack out of Gaza triggered the ongoing war there.

Palestinian militant groups said they were exchanging fire with the Israeli military. The Governor of Jenin, Kamal Abu al-Rub, said on Palestinian radio that Israeli forces had surrounded the city, blocking exit and entry points and access to hospitals, and ripping up infrastructure in the camp.

The Palestinian Health Ministry in the West Bank said Israeli forces had blocked the roads leading to a hospital with dirt barriers and surrounded other medical facilities in Jenin. The Israeli military confirmed it was operating in the cities of Jenin and Tulkarem but did not provide further details. Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz drew comparisons with Gaza and called for similar measures in the West Bank.

"We must deal with the threat just as we deal with the terrorist infrastructure in Gaza, including the temporary evacuation of Palestinian residents and whatever steps might be required. This is a war in every respect, and we must win it," he wrote on X.

At least 652 Palestinians in the West Bank have been killed by Israeli fire since the war in Gaza began over 10 months ago, according to the Palestinian ministry. Most have died during such raids, which often trigger gunbattles with militants.

Israel says the operations are required to dismantle Hamas and other militant groups and to prevent attacks on Israelis, which have also risen since the start of the war. The Palestinian Health Ministry said the bodies of seven people were brought to the hospital in Tubas, another West Bank city, and another two were brought to the hospital in Jenin. *—AP*

Joe Biden **PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA**

JOE BIDEN GIVES NOD FOR GAZA AID PIER

WASHINGTON, 28 AUG

President Joe Biden ordered the construction of a temporary pier to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza earlier this year even as some staffers for the U.S. Agency for International Development expressed concerns that the effort would be difficult to pull off and undercut the effort to persuade Israel to open "more efficient" land crossings to get food into the territory, according to a USAID inspector general report published Tuesday. Biden announced plans to use the temporary pier in his State of the Union address in March to hasten the delivery of aid to the Palestinian territory besieged by war between Israel and Hamas. But the $230 million military-run project known as the Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore system'. *—AP*

TELEGRAM CEO ARREST

Macron is going to lose another $20B USD worth trades with UAE, If they not release Pavel Durov vbefore September 2024 **PHOTO: X@RKMTIMES**

UAE freezes $20B jet deal with France

DUBAI, 28 AUG

United Arab Emirates (UAE) has reportedly suspended its deal with France for the purchase of 80 Rafale fighter jets in response to the recent arrest of Telegram CEO Pavel Durov. Durov was detained in France over the weekend amid an investigation into his messaging platform's handling of illicit activities, including drug trafficking and child pornography. Durov, a dual citizen of France and the UAE, may also hold Russian citizenship, though his current status is unclear. The suspension of the deal, which involves French aerospace company Dassault, has raised concerns about a potential complete halt in military and technical cooperation between the UAE and France. The UAE has sought consular access to Durov as diplomatic tensions rise.

As of Tuesday, Durov had not been formally charged. Reports indicate that he might remain in custody until Wednesday, when a judge is expected to decide whether to press charges or release him.

"The Emirates are closely following the case of Emirati citizen Pavel Durov, founder of the Telegram social network, who was detained by the French authorities at Le Bourget airport. And they conveyed a demand to the French government to urgently provide it with all the necessary consular services," the publication says. Durov, 39, was wanted under a French arrest warrant due to the lack of moderation on Telegram, which allegedly led to the platform being used for money laundering, drug trafficking and sharing paedophilic content.

—ANI with agencies

> The suspension of the deal, which involves French aerospace company Dassault, has raised concerns about a potential complete halt in military and technical cooperation between the UAE and France

Ukraine's Russia offensive is risky

WASHINGTON, 28 AUG

Ukraine's daring ground offensive has taken the fight to Russia, but not nearly as much as its leaders would like because, they say, the United States won't let them.

The US restricts the use of long-range ballistic missiles it provides to Ukraine, which wants to aim them at military targets inside Russia. Ukraine's offensive, along with a barrage of drones and missiles that Moscow launched this week, has intensified pressure on the Biden administration to ease its cautious approach to the use of Western weapons in escalating Ukrainian attacks.

The Biden administration says its careful deliberations, including which advanced weapons it supplies to Ukraine and when, are necessary to avoid provoking retaliation from Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Some analysts agree Putin would take a Ukrainian strike by an American long-range ballistic missile within Russia as an attack by the US itself.

This war is going to end exactly how Western policymakers decide it will end," said Philip Breedlove, a retired US general who led NATO in Europe from 2013 to 2016 and is among the retired US military leaders and diplomats, Republican lawmakers, security analysts and others pushing for a loosening of restrictions on how Ukraine uses Western-provided weapons.

"If we keep doing what we're doing, Ukraine will eventually lose," Breedlove said. "Because right now ... we are purposely not giving Ukraine what they need to win." Lifting such restrictions "would strengthen Ukrainian self-defence, save lives and reduce destruction in Ukraine," European Union foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell wrote Monday on the social platform X after Russia launched more than 200 missiles and drones at Ukraine. The next day, Russia launched 91 more.

Ukraine also announced it has used a US-supplied glide bomb against Russian forces and deployed its own prototype of a long-range drone-missile hybrid.

Zelenskyy's military appeared to have launched the ground offensive on 6 August without consulting American leaders. *—AP*

Biden administration to ease its cautious approach **PHOTO: X@WARINTHEFUTURE**

Pakistan traders observe one day strike over rising costs, new taxes

ISLAMABAD, 28 AUG

Traders in Pakistan went on strike on Wednesday, shutting down their businesses in all major cities and urban areas to protest a rise in electricity costs and new taxes imposed on shop owners.

The government of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has steadily raised electricity prices since Pakistan last month struck a deal with the International Monetary Fund for a new USD 7 billion loan. The higher cost of living and price hikes have triggered widespread discontent and drawn protests. Most of the public markets across Pakistan were closed on Wednesday, though pharmacies and grocery stores selling basic food items remained open. Kashif Chaudhry, a strike leader, said those were not closed so as not to inconvenience the general public.

Stores were shuttered in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad, the nearby garrison city of Rawalpindi, as well as in the city of Lahore, the country's culture capital, and the main economic hub of Karachi.

owever, traders in the northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the southwestern Balochistan provinces observed a partial strike, keeping some stores open while closing others. The strike is aimed at forcing the government to reverse the recent hikes in power bills and the controversial tax that followed the recent talks with the IMF, which wants to see Pakistan broaden its tax base. *—AP*

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has steadily raised electricity prices since last month in Pakistan **PHOTO: X@ATSEEZA**

Trump hit with revised indictment

WASHINGTON, 28 AUG

Federal prosecutors accusing former United States President Donald Trump of election interference have released a newly revised indictment, in response to a recent Supreme Court ruling.

Tuesday's indictment narrows the focus of the case, trimming away interactions Trump had with the Department of Justice and zeroing in on his role as a political candidate.

Still, the central charge remains the same: that Trump attempted to subvert the 2020 presidential election and overturn his loss to Democrat Joe Biden. Trump has long claimed, falsely and without evidence, that widespread voter fraud marred the 2020 race.

Donald Trump **PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA**

The reworked case, unfolding in Washington, DC, is one of four indictments against Trump. He is the first US president to face and be convicted of criminal charges. Only one of the four cases, however, has culminated in a conviction: In May, Trump was found guilty of 34 charges of falsifying business records in New York. Even that verdict has been thrown into potential legal limbo as a result of a recent Supreme Court decision granting broad immunity to presidential actions.

In the ruling, what counts as "official" acts goes beyond what falls within a president's constitutional authority, marking a significant widening of executive power.

—Al Jazeera

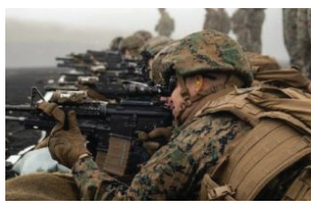


PHOTO: X@AFRICANHUB

Haiti's army wants to recruit more youths

PORT-AU-PRINCE, 28 AUG

The announcement that Haiti's military wanted recruits crackled through a small radio perched on a street stall in downtown Port-au-Prince where Maurenceley Clerge repairs and sells smartphones.

It was early morning, and the 21-year-old paused, eager to hear the details. He envisioned earning enough to afford his own food and rent. Two weeks later, he completed the required paperwork and stood in line with hundreds of other Haitians under a brutal sun for the chance to join up.

"It's the moment I have been waiting for," said Clerge, who stays with a friend who also provides him with food. "I want to serve as a citizen of this country and also to move up and upgrade my life." Thousands of young Haitians are jumping at the chance to become soldiers as widespread gang violence creates a rare job opportunity in a deeply impoverished country where work is scarce. Brushing aside the possibility they could be kidnapped, tortured or killed, Haiti's youngest generation is answering the call of a government seeking to rebuild a once-reviled military, reinstated just years ago with the aim to crush gangs.

—AP

DELHI MUSTN'T INTERFERE

B'desh wants ties with India: JeI Chief

DHAKA, 28 AUG

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami supremo Shafiqur Rahman has said his party seeks harmonious and stable ties with India but asserted that New Delhi needs to reconsider its foreign policy in the neighbourhood, as bilateral relations do not entail interfering in each other's internal issues.

Rahman, who is the Ameer of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, stated in an interview with PTI that his party supports close relations between India and Bangladesh but also believes that Bangladesh should maintain strong and balanced relations with countries like the US, China, and "Pakistan, by leaving behind the baggage of the past."

Rahman, 65, contended that New Delhi's perception of Jamaat-e-Islami as anti-India is mistaken, asserting that "Jamaat-e-Islami is not against any country; it is a wrong perception," and emphasised that this perception needs to change.

Jamaat-e-Islami supremo Shafiqur Rahman **PHOTO: PTI**

The Jamaat-e-Islami suggested that it would have been better if former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, after resigning due to unrest, had not fled to India. *—PTI*

Woman TV journalist's body recovered from lake in Dhaka

DHAKA, 28 AUG

The body of a 32-year-old woman TV journalist in Bangladesh was recovered from a lake here in the capital on Wednesday, according to media reports. The deceased was identified as Sarah Rahanuma, a newsroom editor at Gazi TV, a Bengali-language satellite and cable television channel owned by Gazi Group. Her body was found floating in Hatirjheel Lake in Dhaka, The Dhaka Tribune newspaper reported. Inspector Bachchu Mia, in charge of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) police outpost, confirmed the recovery of her body. Pedestrians pulled the body from the lake and took it to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where the doctor declared her dead around 2.00 am. *—PTI*

Firms struggle to attract foreign workers in Germany

JENA, 28 AUG

When electrical engineer Preetam Gaikwad first moved to Jena in 2013, she was smitten by what the eastern German city had to offer: a prestigious university, top research institutions, and cutting-edge technology companies, global leaders in their field.

Eleven years later, the Indian native takes a more sober view. "I'm really worried about the development of the political situation here," Gaikwad, 43 said. Jena is in the eastern German state of Thuringia, which has elections on 1 September.

The far-right Alternative for Germany party, or AfD, is currently leading the polls with about 30 per cent support, far ahead of the centre-right Christian Democrats (21 per cent) and the centre-left Social Democrats of Chancellor Olaf Scholz (7 per cent).

The AfD's anti-foreigner stance is the cornerstone of its campaign, raising concern among businesses like Jenoptik, Gaikwad's employer. The company, which supplied lens assemblies for Perseverance, the NASA remote vehicle on Mars, employs 1,680 people in Jena and more than 4,600 globally.

The rise of the AfD is making that more difficult, says Jenoptik CEO Stefan Traeger. More and more prospective employees tell Traeger that while they would love to work for Jenoptik, they won't take a job there because they don't want to live in a state dominated by a hard-right party that ostracizes migrants or other minorities such as members of the LGBTQI+ community. *—AP*

PHOTO: PTI

Gold prices remain steady; silver declines ₹400

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

Gold prices remained flat at Rs 74,350 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday in scattered deals even as it weakened in the overseas markets. Silver prices, however, declined Rs 400 to Rs 87,800 per kilogram. It had ended at Rs 88,200 per kg in the previous session on Tuesday. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also ruled flat at Rs 74,000 per 10 grams. Traders attributed the fall in silver price due to poor offtake by industrial units and global influences. In the international markets, comex gold is trading at USD 2,542.20 per ounce, down USD 10.70 per ounce or 0.42 per cent. Silver was also quoting lower at USD 29.93 per ounce in the global markets. —*PTI*

Rupee falls 3 paise to close at 83.96 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 28 AUG

The rupee depreciated 3 paise to close at 83.96 (provisional) against the American currency on Wednesday, amidst strong dollar demand from importers particularly oil companies. Forex traders said a positive trend in domestic equities, foreign fund inflows and overnight decline in crude oil prices cushioned the downside. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.94 and touched an intra-day low of 83.97 against the US dollar. The domestic currency finally settled at 83.96 (provisional), 3 paise lower from its previous close. On Tuesday, the rupee depreciated by 6 paise to close at 83.93 against the American currency. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.36 per cent higher at 100.91. —*PTI*

Uptick in auto demand likely in H2 FY25: L&T

MUMBAI, 28 AUG

L&T Finance on Wednesday said it is expecting a decent uptick in automobile demand during the festive season on the back of good monsoon and is hopeful of a reasonable improvement in the microfinance segment in the second half of the current fiscal. "Of late, there are reports that the auto industry is seeing some slowdown, but I am very hopeful that on the back of good monsoon that we see, I think during the festive period, we will see a decent uptick both in terms of two-wheelers as well as four-wheelers," L&T finance Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Sudipta Roy told PTI. Stating that the microfinance industry is currently going through a little bit of adjustment time frame that is more to do with some sort of the disruption during the elections in terms of the social income flows which has resumed right now. —*PTI*

Centre gives second extension to FSSAI chief Ganji V Rao

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

The Centre on Tuesday extended for a year the tenure of Ganji Kamala V Rao as the Chief Executive Officer of the Food Safety & Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), according to a Personnel Ministry order. This is his second extension on the post. His current extended term was to end on 31 August, 2024. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved extension of re-employment of Ganji Kamala V Rao as CEO, FSSAI on contract basis for a period of one year beyond 31 August, 2024, the order said. Rao is a 1990-batch (retired) Indian Administrative Service officer of Kerala cadre. —*PTI*

Nifty gains marginally to hit lifetime high

Sensex climbed 73.80 points to settle at 81,785.56

MUMBAI, 28 AUG

Equity benchmark Nifty rose marginally to hit a fresh lifetime high of 25,052 and Sensex gained over 70 points on Wednesday, helped by buying in IT stocks amid a largely positive global market.

Recent foreign fund inflows and lower global crude oil prices also strengthened investor sentiments, traders said.

Rising for the tenth straight session, the NSE Nifty went up by 34.60 points or 0.14 per cent to settle at a new closing high of 25,052.35. The benchmark surged 111.85 points or 0.44 per cent to hit a fresh intra-day all-time peak of 25,129.60.

Extending its winning run to the seventh day in a row, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 73.80 points or 0.09 per cent to settle at 81,785.56. During the day, it jumped 327.5 points or 0.40 per cent to 82,039.26.

Asian Paints, Maruti, Nestle, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Axis Bank and UltraTech Cement were among the laggards PHOTO: PTI

Among the 30 Sensex firms, Bharti Airtel, Infosys, IndusInd Bank, Sun Pharma, Tech Mahindra, Mahindra & Mahindra, Bajaj Finance and JSW Steel were the biggest gainers.

Asian Paints, Maruti, Nestle, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Axis Bank and UltraTech Cement were among the laggards.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 1,503.76 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data.

Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 604.08 crore.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.82 per cent to USD 78.90 a barrel.

After oscillating between highs and lows, the BSE benchmark eked out a marginal gain of 13.65 points or 0.02 per cent to settle at 81,711.76 on Tuesday. The NSE Nifty ended almost flat, up 7.15 points or 0.03 per cent, at 25,017.75 -- its ninth straight session of gains. —*PTI*

₹ 2,048 CR DEAL

Zomato completes acquisition of Paytm's biz

MUMBAI, 28 AUG

Food delivery company Zomato has completed the acquisition of Paytm subsidiaries WEPL and OTPL for the entertainment ticketing business, the company said in its filing with the exchanges.

On 21 August, the Deepinder Goyal-led company entered into definitive agreements for the acquisition of Paytm's entertainment arms.

The deal, valued at Rs 2,048 crores on a cash-free, debt-free basis, stands "as a testament to the value" Paytm has created through its entertainment ticketing business, bringing choice and convenience to millions of Indians with its services and scale, the company said in a release filed with exchanges. As part of this agreement, OCL will transfer its entertainment ticketing business to Zomato by transferring OCL's entertainment ticketing business to its 100 per cent subsidiaries, Orbgen Technologies Pvt Limited (OTPL) and Wasteland Entertainment Pvt Ltd (WEPL) and selling a 100 per cent stake in its subsidiaries OTPL and WEPL, which operate the TicketNew and Insider platforms.

PHOTO: ANI

The movie and event tickets will continue to be available on the Paytm app, as well as on the TicketNew and Insider platforms, ensuring a smooth and uninterrupted experience for users and merchant partners.

As per Paytm, the company built movie ticketing from the ground up and acquired TicketNew and Insider for a total consideration of Rs 268 crores from 2017 to 2018. —*PTI*

'Zomato For Enterprise' to ease expense for corporates

Zomato CEO Deepinder Goyal on Wednesday announced that the food delivery giant is set to introduce Zomato For Enterprise (ZFE) for companies to solve food expense management. The introduction of ZFE comes nearly a week after the company shut down its 'Intercity Legends' service. Legends offered iconic dishes from 10 cities to other parts of the country. The company had earlier put on hold the service. —*PTI*

GDP growth rate to be moderated at 6.7%: Report

MUMBAI, 28 AUG

Ahead of the official release of the first quarter GDP growth numbers for FY25 on 30 August, a report by the Union Bank suggests the GDP rate to be moderated at around 6.7 per cent.

The Gross Value Added (GVA) growth for the same period is likely to settle at around 5.8 per cent as against 6.3 per cent in the last quarter of the previous fiscal, (Q4 FY24).

This figure is slightly below the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) projection of 7.1 per for Q1 FY25.

As per the report, the key driver of the slowdown was the industry segment growth. Election-related uncertainty, imposition of a code of conduct leading to lagged government spending and June being a seasonally weak quarter have added to the anticipated moderate GDP growth figure.

"Key driver of the slowdown was the industry segment and

PHOTO: PTI

secondly, June is a seasonally weak quarter and election-related uncertainty combined with lagged government spending exacerbated the impact. High-frequency indicators also signalled a slowdown as reflected in our economic activity index."

This marks the third consecutive quarter of declining industrial growth, with the sector's GVA growth rate falling from 8.4 per cent in Q4FY24 to 5.8 per cent in Q1FY25.

The report however is optimistic on the overall growth outlook and says that even with a slowdown in Q1 the GDP growth for the full year at 7 per cent. —*PTI*

TO RAISE RS 400 CR

Adani Enterprises launches ₹800 cr NCD valued at ₹1K cr

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

Adani Enterprises Limited has launched a public issue of secured, rated, listed, redeemable, non-convertible debentures (NCDs) valued at Rs1,000 each, aiming to raise Rs 400 crore initially. The company has also included a green shoe option, allowing for an oversubscription of up to Rs 400 crore, bringing the total potential issue size to Rs 800 crore, as per an exchange filing

Adani Enterprises' share price was down 0.60 per cent to Rs 3048.50 on Wednesday, on the BSE. The company has a market capitalisation of Rs 3,47,466.64 crore.

The company confirmed that its Board of Directors approved the public issue at a meeting on 4 August, 2022. On 27 August, 2024, the Management Committee further ratified and adopted the prospectus for the issuance. The debentures will be listed on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) and the National Stock Exchange of India (NSE), with BSE designated as the primary exchange.

The company has also included a green shoe option, allowing for an oversubscription of up to Rs 400 crore PHOTO: PTI

The issuance will open for subscription on 4 September, 2024, and close on 17 September, 2024. Investors can opt for debentures with tenures ranging from 24 to 60 months, depending on their preferences. As per the filing, interest payments will be made on an annual, quarterly, or cumulative basis based on the specific series of NCDs chosen. —*Agencies*

BHARTI AIRTEL TO OWN 50% STAKE IN INDUS TOWERS

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

Bharti Airtel will hold over 50 per cent stake in Indus Towers after completion of the ongoing Rs 2,640-crore share buyback scheme of the telecom infrastructure firm, a regulatory filing said on Wednesday.

"... In terms of communication dated August 27, 2024 issued by Indus Towers, the shareholding of the company in Indus Towers will increase to more than 50 per cent (i.e. about 50.005 per cent) of its paid-up share capital, subject to completion of relevant activities within stipulated timelines for Buyback," Bharti Airtel said in a regulatory filing.

Bharti Airtel at present holds 48.95 per cent stake in Indus Towers.

Indus Towers has set August 28 as the last date for completion of settlement of bids by the BSE. —*PTI*

Office demand likely to hit record this year in top 8 cities: C&W

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

Gross leasing of office space across eight major cities is estimated to cross 80 million square feet this year -- an all-time high -- on high demand from corporates, according to Cushman & Wakefield.

However, the net absorption of office demand is likely to remain flat with leasing expected to cross 40 million square feet this year.

In the 2023 calendar year, the gross leasing of office space stood at 74 million square feet while the net office leasing was 41 million square feet across eight major cities -- Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Pune and Ahmedabad.

Real estate consultant Cushman & Wakefield on Wednesday released its estimates of office demand for the 2024 calendar year.

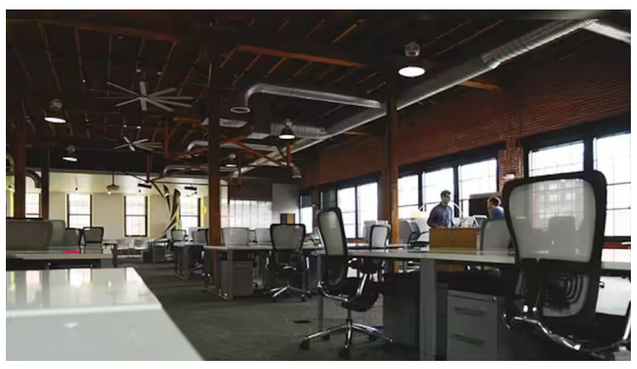
"Indian office market is poised for another record-breaking year, with leasing across the top 8 cities anticipated to cross 80 million square feet in 2024," Cushman & Wakefield said.

- In the 2023, the gross leasing of office space stood at 74 million square feet while the net office leasing was 41 million square feet across eight major cities including Bengaluru

Cushman & Wakefield said the first half of 2024 recorded 41.9 million square feet of office leasing, driven by fresh demand from multinational corporations, the optimisation of pre-leased buildings in key cities and a higher return to the office.

The momentum is expected to continue with net absorption anticipated to cross more than 40 million square feet in 2024.

The IT-BPM sector continued to dominate leasing activity, contributing 26 per cent of the gross leasing in H1 2024. —*PTI*



Gross leasing of office space estimated to cross 80M PHOTO: PIXABAY

SEBI bans Rana Sugars, others for 2 yrs

It also fined Rs 63 cr on charges of diversion of funds PHOTO: PTI

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

Markets regulator SEBI has debarred 14 entities including, Rana Sugars promoters' and other related entities from the securities markets for two years and slapped a Rs 63-crore fine on them on charges of diversion of funds.

The regulator also prohibited Inder Pratap Singh Rana (promoter), Ranjit Singh Rana (Chairman), Veer Pratap Singh Rana (MD), Gurjeet Singh Rana, Karan Pratap Singh Rana, Rajbans Kaur, Preet Inder Singh Rana and Sukhjinder Kaur (promoter) from holding any position as director or key managerial person of any other listed company for two years.

Ranjit Singh, Veer Pratap and Sukhjinder Kaur were also the promoters of Rana Sugars Ltd, as per the exchange data.

Individually, SEBI imposed penalties in the range of Rs 3 crore to 7 crore on Rana Sugars, its promoters, and other related entities.

Related parties are Flawless Traders Pvt Ltd (FTPL), Century Agros Pvt Ltd (CAPL), Jay Aar Builders Pvt Ltd (JABPL), RJ Texfab Pvt Ltd (RJPL) and RGS Traders (RGSPL).

The regulator found that related parties aided and abetted Rana Sugars, its promoters and directors to divert funds from RSL and violated PFUTP norms, the order said.

SEBI also directed Rana Sugars to recover Rs 607 crore from related entities. —*PTI*

D2C meat delivery Zappfresh files draft papers with SEBI

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

Zappfresh, which sells meat online, has filed preliminary documents with capital markets regulator SEBI to launch its initial public offering (IPO).

In a statement on Wednesday, Zappfresh said it has filed the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) with SEBI to list on the BSE SME platform.

The Initial Public Offering (IPO) will consist of a fresh issue of 59.06 lakh equity shares, with a face value of Rs 10, and will not include an offer-for-sale (OFS) component.

Zappfresh said it is the first direct-to-consumer (D2C) food startup to embark on this listing journey.

Deepanshu Manchanda, founder of Zappfresh, said, "We are proud to take this monumental step towards listing on the BSE SME platform, which testifies to our unwavering dedication to transparency, accountability." —*PTI*

KEY ROLE IN MARGINALISATION

PMJDY blends poor with mainstream: FM

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), the largest financial inclusion initiative in the world, integrates the poor into the economic mainstream and plays a crucial role in the development of marginalised communities, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Wednesday.

PMJDY, the national mission for financial inclusion, which completed a decade of successful implementation continuously endeavours to provide support to the marginalised and economically backward sections through its financial inclusion interventions.

In her message on the 10th anniversary of PMJDY,

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman PHOTO: PTI

Sitharaman said, "universal and affordable access to formal banking services is essential for achieving financial inclusion and empowerment. It integrates the poor into the economic mainstream and plays a crucial role in the development of marginalised communities."

By providing universal, affordable, and formal financial services including bank accounts, small savings schemes, insurance, and credit to the previously unbanked, PM Jan Dhan Yojana has transformed the banking and financial landscape of the country over the last decade, she said.

The success of the initiative is reflected in 53 crore people having been brought into the formal banking system through the opening of Jan Dhan Accounts, she said, adding, these bank accounts have garnered a deposit balance of Rs 2.3 lakh crore, and resulted in the issuance of over 36 crore free-of-cost RuPay cards, which also provide for a Rs 2 lakh accident insurance cover.

Notably, there are no account opening fees or maintenance charges and no requirement to maintain a minimum balance, she added. —*PTI*

US banks to support UPI for faster digital payments

MUMBAI, 28 AUG

As the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) goes global, the US private banks are expected to explore connecting with India's unique digital payments solution, Federal Reserve Governor Christopher Waller said on Wednesday. He further added that cross-border payment interlinking is one of the key areas outlined in the G20 roadmap.

Speaking at the 'Global Fintech Fest' in the financial capital, he said the US does not have enough banks connected to make a full-service product but "we have some private banks which can connect to the UPI," and for this, "we first need to build a compelling value proposition for such an integration".

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Waller praised India's digital payments infrastructure (DPI) that has brought financial inclusion to millions in the country.

Days after RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das sought to bring greater efficiency to trans-border transactions, a senior US Fed official said that frictionless cross-border payments will make it difficult to check money laundering and terror funding. —*PTI*

Pathak named India goalkeeper in Asian Champions

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

Krishan Bahadur Pathak, on expected lines, was on Wednesday named the main goalkeeper after the retirement of PR Sreejesh in the Harmanpreet Singh-led 18-member Indian team for the upcoming Asian Champions Trophy. The tournament will see defending champions India vie for top honours alongside Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Japan and hosts China at Hulunbuir from 8-17 September. Sreejesh announced his retirement after India won a second successive Olympic bronze medal in Paris earlier this month. Pathak, who was India's standby goalkeeper at the Paris Olympics and in many tournaments prior to that, will now be the man in charge at the post, while Suraj Karkera will be the reserve custodian. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Zaheer Khan set to join LSG as team mentor

KOLKATA, 28 AUG

Lucknow Super Giants are set to appoint former India speedster Zaheer Khan as their mentor ahead of the IPL mega auction. The appointment marks the return of the 45-year-old left-arm pacer to the IPL fold after two years, having been associated with five-time champions Mumbai Indians from 2018-2022. A formal unveiling is scheduled at the RPSG Group Headquarters here on Wednesday. "Zaheer has been appointed as team mentor and the unveiling will happen later today," sources told PTI. Zaheer will thus take up the role left vacant by Gautam Gambhir last year when he went to join his former franchise Kolkata Knight Riders and guided them to the IPL title in 2024. Gambhir is now the Indian head coach. *—PTI*

Malan, ex-T20 batter, retires from Eng cricket duty

LONDON, 28 AUG

Dawid Malan, the former top-ranked T20 batter who scored centuries for England in all formats, has announced his retirement from the international arena. The 36-year-old Malan told British newspaper The Times of London that he exceeded expectations with his success in the white-ball game but was disappointed that he couldn't handle the intensity of Test cricket. Malan, a top-order batter, played 22 Tests as well as 30 ODIs and 62 T20 internationals. It was in the T20 game where he excelled, becoming No. 1 in the batting rankings in 2020 and winning the T20 World Cup in 2022. Malan was left out of the squad for the upcoming white-ball series against Australia and hasn't played for England in any format since the 50-over World Cup last year. It was his inability to forge a career as a Test batter that leaves him with most regrets. *—PTI*

Arsenal signs Spain int'l Merino from Sociedad

LONDON, 28 AUG

Arsenal signed Spain international Mikel Merino from Real Sociedad to strengthen its midfield options for its latest bid to win the Premier League title. Merino has reportedly joined for a fee of 32 million pounds ($42 million) on what Arsenal said was a "long-term contract," four days after Sociedad coach Imanol Alguacil gave the player a public farewell. Merino helped Spain win the recent European Championship. His goal late in extra time secured a 2-1 win over host nation Germany in the quarterfinals. A well-rounded attacking midfielder, Merino has been a key player for Sociedad after joining the Basque club in 2018. *—AP*

INDIA AIMS TO GET 10 MEDALS IN ATHLETICS

84 athletes to compete across 12 sports

Indian athletes pose for a group photograph in Paris on Wednesday **PHOTO: @DDNEWSLIVE**

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

India can clinch 10 medals including five golds in athletics at the Paralympics starting on Wednesday, reckoned para athletics head coach Satyanarayana, adding that the aim will be to better their performances from the last edition. Satyanarayana said the Indian athletes have trained intensely for the Paris Para Games as an overall contingent of 84 athletes — 52 men and 32 women — will take part in the event. It will also be India's largest contingent ever at the Paralympics.

"In Tokyo, many of our athletes secured silver and bronze medals. Our focus this time is to convert those into gold," Satyanarayana said in a release. "The training has been intense, and our athletes have shown incredible dedication. Most of them have already reached Paris to acclimatise to the conditions and continue their rigorous training," he added.

> Satyanarayana said the Indian athletes have trained intensely for the Paris Para Games as an overall contingent of 84 athletes — 52 men and 32 women — will take part in the event.

Among the Indian athletes who are expected to excel are Sumit Antil (men's javelin F64), Mariyappan Thangavelu (men's high jump T42), Deepthi Jeevanji (women's 400m T20), Sachin Khilari (men's shotput F46), Ekta Bhyan (women's club throw F52) and Simran Sharma (women's 200m T12).

With an overall 19 medals, India finished at the 24th spot in the tally with five gold, eight silver and six bronze medals in the Tokyo Paralympics. In athletics, India won eight medals including one gold, five silver and two bronze.

Organisers are promising a spectacular show to open the Games. Once again it's being held outside the confines of a stadium, but unlike the Olympic opening ceremony, which featured a boat parade on the Seine River, the Paralympic ceremony is happening exclusively on land, with athletes parading down the famous Champs-Elysées to the ceremony at the Place de la Concorde. Organisers say more than 2 million tickets have been sold for the Paris Paralympics. Competition begins Thursday with the first medals handed out in taekwondo, table tennis and track cycling. Athletes are grouped by impairment levels to ensure as level a playing field as possible. Only two sports on the program, goalball and boccia, don't have an Olympic equivalent. *—PTI/AP*

KEY EVENTS TO WATCH OUT FOR

BADMINTON

MIXED DOUBLES SL/SU | 12.00PM

T Murugesan, 22, Tamil Nadu

Murugesan bagged 1 Gold, 1 Silver and 1 Bronze in Asian Para Games, 2023

K Nitesh, 29, Haryana

Nitesh won Gold in Brazil Para-Badminton International, 2023

MIXED DOUBLES SH6 | 2.00 PM

S Lalinakere Yathiraj, 41, Karnataka

Yathiraj won Silver in Badminton men's singles SL4

P Kohli, 22, Punjab

Kohli won Gold in Uganda Para-Badminton International, 2021

MIXED DOUBLES SH6 | 12.40PM AND 7.30PM

S Solaimalai, 28, Tamil Nadu

Solaimalai won Bronze at Asian Para Games, 2022

NS Sivan, 19, Tamil Nadu

Sivan bagged 2 Bronze at the 2022 Asian Para Games in Hangzhou, China

MEN'S SINGLE SL4 | 2.40PM

S Kadam, 31, Maharashtra

MEN'S SINGLE SL4 | 3.20PM

S Lalinakere Yathiraj, 41, Karnataka

He became National Champion after winning gold medal at second National Para Badminton Championships in 2018

MEN'S SINGLE SL3 | 4 PM

K Nitesh, 29, Haryana

M Sarkar, 33, Uttarakhand

Sarkar won 50 international medals with 19 Gold, 13 Silver and 18 Bronze

Shuttler Krishna Nagat secured gold in the men's singles SH6 event at Tokyo 2020

TAEKWONDO

WOMEN'S 47KG K44 | 2.34PM

AS Tanwar, 24, Haryana

Won Bronze in 5th Asian Para Open Taekwondo Championships

SWIMMING

MEN'S 50M FREESTYLE S10 | 1.00PM ONWARDS

TRACK CYCLING C1-3 | 4.25PM

Jyoti Gaderiya, 25, Hyderabad

Has won twelve international medals in para-cycling

SHOOTING

WOMEN'S 10M AIR RIFLE STANDING SH1 | 2.30PM

Avani Lekhara, 22, Rajasthan

In 2023, she is ranked world no. 1 in Women's 10m Air Rifle standing SH1

ARCHERY

MEN'S RECURVE RANKING ROUND | 4.30PM

H Singh, 33, Punjab

Won Bronze at World Archery Oceania 2024 Para Grand Prix

WOMEN'S COMPOUND RANKING ROUND | 4.30PM

Sarita Devi, 37, Jammu and Kashmir

Won Bronze at Para Asian Archery Championship, 2023 in Bangkok

MEN'S COMPOUND RANKING ROUND | 8.30PM

Rakesh Kumar, 39, Jammu

Represented India at the 2020 Summer Paralympics, held in Tokyo, Japan

Where to watch: Jio Cinema

Alcaraz wins opening match

NEW YORK, 28 AUG

Carlos Alcaraz extended his winning streak to 15 straight Grand Slam matches with a 6-2, 4-6, 6-3, 6-1 victory over Li Tu on Tuesday night in the first round of the US Open.

The No. 3 seed from Spain won the French Open and Wimbledon titles earlier this year, giving him four major championships. If he can add another US Open title to the one he captured in 2022, Alcaraz would join Rod Laver (1969) and Rafael Nadal (2010) as the only men to capture those three Grand Slam titles in the same year during the Open era.

On the other hand, after a sloppy and slow opening set, Sinner pulled away for a 2-6, 6-2, 6-1, 6-2 victory against Mackie McDonald of the United States to reach the second round at Flushing Meadows. "The response from fans, I feel it has been great. Also throughout, when the news came out, in the practice sessions, there was a lot of support, which I'm very glad and happy about," Sinner said. "It is still a little bit not easy. You have to go through, day by day." Sinner turned things around quickly in the second set, making just 15 unforced errors combined over the last three sets, including zero in the third, and next will face another American, Alex Michelsen.

Carlos Alcaraz **PHOTO: X / @USOPEN**

In a few hours into a match Dan Evans glanced over at the scoreboard. More than an hour later, Evans won the longest match since tiebreakers were introduced in 1970, beating Karen Khachanov 6-7 (6), 7-6 (2), 7-6 (4), 4-6, 6-4 on Tuesday in 5 hours, 35 minutes. *—AP*

Naomi Osaka reacts after winning the match **PHOTO: X / @USOPEN**

Osaka pips Ostapenko, gets her top-10 win in 4 years

NEW YORK, 28 AUG

A year ago, still on maternity leave and still unsure when she would play elite tennis again, Naomi Osaka visited the US Open to appear with Michael Phelps for a discussion about mental health. While at the site, she sat in the stands to watch one of Coco Gauff's matches.

Osaka also already was thinking about being back on a court at Flushing Meadows, so much so that she was pondering what she might want to wear to compete. And there she was Tuesday at Louis Armstrong Stadium, overpowering No. 10 seed Jelena Ostapenko 6-3, 6-2 while decked out, from her visor to her dress to the bows on her back and attached to her shoes, in lime green — the color of this " Brat " summer, as it happens (IYKYK) — and playing very much like a two-time champion at the place and a former No. 1-ranked star.

Other seeded men advancing included No. 5 Daniil Medvedev, No. 7 Hubert Hurkacz and No. 25 Jack Draper, but No. 11 Stefanos Tsitsipas and No. 19 Felix Auger-Aliassime both lost, as did No. 23 Karen Khachanov, who came out on the wrong end of the longest U.S. Open match, by time, since tiebreakers were instituted in 1970. *—AP*

SINQUEFIELD CUP

Gukesh draws with Giri; Praggs holds Caruana

SAINT LOUIS, 28 AUG

India's Grandmasters D Gukesh and R Praggnanadhaa played out their eighth draw in as many games at the Sinquefield Cup, which is a part of the Grand Chess Tour.

While World Championship challenger Gukesh signed peace with Anish Giri of Holland in just 23 moves, Praggnanadhaa too followed suit and drew with local favourite Fabiano Caruana in 28 moves. With all the games ending in draws in the eighth round, Alireza Firouzja of France won the Grand Chess Tour with one round to spare here and became entitled to a USD 100,000 bonus after his successful stint throughout.

In the eighth round, Firouzja played out the longest game that also ended peacefully after 80 moves against Russian Ian Nepomniachtchi. In the two other games of the day in the ten-player double round-robin tournament, Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan split the point with Ding Liren of China and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France drew with Wesley So of United States.

Alireza took his tally to an unassailable 5.5 points out of eight games and Caruana is the only player who can catch him on points table provided Alireza loses his final bout against Praggnanandhaa and the American himself beats Giri.

Gukesh and Pragga **PHOTOS: PTI**

The third place is still shared by five players on four points apiece. They are Gukesh, Praggnanandhaa, Vachier-Lagrave, So and Abdusattorov. Nepomniachtchi and Liren come in next on 3.5 points, a half point clear of Anish Giri who is at the last spot. *—PTI*

Uruguay players banned after Copa America brawl

ASUNCION, 28 AUG

South American soccer body CONMEBOL suspended on Wednesday several Uruguayan internationals due to incidents at the Copa America semi-final against Colombia in July.

Liverpool striker Darwin Núñez will be out for five Uruguay fixtures, including several in World Cup qualifying, while Tottenham midfielder Rodrigo Bentancur was banned for four matches. Mathías Olivera, Ronald Araújo and José Maria Giménez will miss three games apiece.

The incident took place at the Bank of America Stadium in Charlotte, with Uruguay players involved in a brawl with fans after their team lost 1-0 to Colombia. Núñez will also pay a fine of USD 20,000, Bentancur USD 16,000 and Olivera, Araujo and Giménez USD 12,000 each.

Seven other Uruguay players will also pay a fine of USD 5,000 apiece. Giménez told journalists after the incident the team were trying to protect their families from Colombian supporters.

PHOTO: X

Chile goalkeeper Bravo retires from soccer

Chile goalkeeper Claudio Bravo retired from soccer at age 41. Bravo had also played for Manchester City, Barcelona and Real Sociedad. He won two Spanish league titles and one Champions League trophy with Barcelona and lifted three Premier League trophies with Man City.

"It is the moment to close a very important cycle in my life," Bravo said in his social media channels. "I think I have made the right decision, a decision I thought long about." *—AP*

BEDROCK OF THE GAME

Will ensure Test remains priority: Jay

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

Newly-elected ICC Chairman Jay Shah says he will look to ensure that Test cricket forms the "bedrock" of the game in his tenure during which he will also try to "dismantle barriers that have hindered cricket's progress".

The 35-year-old will relinquish his current position of BCCI secretary to succeed incumbent Greg Barclay on December 1 as the youngest ICC Chairman for a term of two years.

"While the T20 is a naturally exciting format, it is equally important that Test cricket remains a priority for everyone as it forms the bedrock of our game," Shah said in a statement issued by the BCCI on Tuesday.

"We must see to it that cricketers are driven to longer format and our efforts will be channelised towards this goal," he added. Shah said he would also like to work towards setting up a separate program for talent search. He emphasised on lifting the standard of the game across the globe.

ICC Chairman Jay Shah **PHOTO: PTI**

"I want to assure you that I will do everything possible to elevate the standard of our game across the globe. As I step into this pivotal role, I am resolutely committed to meeting your high expectations and dedicating myself to the beautiful game of cricket," he said. Shah, who is the son of union home minister Amit Shah, will relinquish his position as the BCCI secretary at the board's Annual General Meeting likely to be held towards the end of next month or in October. Shah became the fifth Indian after the late Jagmohan Dalmiya, Sharad Pawar, N Srinivasan and Shashank Manohar to be elected for the high-profile job. *—PTI*

Kohli, Jaiswal move up in Test

DUBAI, 28 AUG

Senior India batter Virat Kohli moved up two rungs to eighth place while his captain Rohit Sharma dropped a spot to sixth in the latest ICC Test rankings released here on Wednesday.

Joining Rohit and Kohli in the top 10 is young Yashasvi Jaiswal, who has moved up a spot to seventh. Veteran England batter Joe Root maintained his place as the top ranked Test batter in the world following their success in the opening Test against Sri Lanka in Manchester. But Root's teammate Harry Brook has made a massive jump on the back of scores of 56 and 32 during that Old Trafford contest.

The 25-year-old has risen three places to fourth overall, leaping past Pakistan's Babar Azam, Australia's Steve Smith and Rohit. Babar has dropped a whopping six places to fall from shared third to ninth following a rare failure in the first innings of Pakistan's Test against Bangladesh in Rawalpindi. Bangladesh's Mushfiqur Rahim has achieved a career-high rating as he climbed seven spots to move to 17th. *—PTI*